NATION
SC refuses to intervene in order on Adani's JAL buy
≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS
Markets bullish post rebound on softening crude prices
≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS
Mumbai seeks a reset against rampaging RR
≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Iran says no to truce deal as Don's deadline looms

Proposal calls for 45-day truce and reopening of Hormuz

TEHRAN, 6 APRIL

Iran has rejected a new 45-day ceasefire proposal as tensions with the United States escalate over the Strait of Hormuz. US President Donald Trump has delayed a threatened military strike, while mediators continue to push for talks.

The draft proposal, formulated by Egypt, Pakistan and Turkey, called for a 45-day ceasefire and the reopening of the strategic waterway. Pakistan sent the proposal late Sunday to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US special envoy Steve Witkoff. The plan aimed to create a window for broader negotiations and potentially a permanent peace deal.

Iran was the first to respond. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei described the proposal as "illogical" and unacceptable. He said the US and Israel "have no red lines" and asserted that Iran cannot negotiate under threat. Baghaei added that Iran's national security remains paramount and that the country would defend itself "with all its might." Washington has yet to respond.

Meanwhile, President Trump warned Iran it would face strikes on power plants and bridges if the strait remained closed. In an expletive-laden post on social media, he wrote: "Open the f****** strait, you crazy bastards, or you'll be living in hell — just watch." He later issued a one-line post stating, "Tuesday, 8pm Eastern Time," leaving uncertainty over whether the deadline had been extended. Trump told Axios that his envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, were engaged in "intense negotiations" with Tehran, but threatened to "blow up everything" if the strait was not reopened. Diplomatic efforts intensified amid the threats. India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar received a call from Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi. The ministers discussed bilateral relations and the escalating tensions in West Asia. Jaishankar posted on X: "Received a call from the Foreign Minister of Iran. Discussed the present situation." —*PTI*

>>>*More on Pgs 2, 4, 6 & 7*

WEST ASIA WAR
DAY-38

Pedestrians look at the destructed Grand Hosseiniyeh mosque after reported US-Israeli airstrikes in Zanjan, Iran —*PTI*

> **We've lost the keys. 8pm is not that good. Could you change it to between 1 and 2pm or if possible, 1 and 2am?**
>
> —Iran responds to Donald Trump's threat to either open Hormuz or face more attacks

2 more Indian flagged LPG ships exit Gulf

MUMBAI, 6 APRIL

Two more Indian-flagged LPG tankers, Green Asha and Green Sanvi, have left the Gulf for India, according to ship tracking data from LSEG and Kpler. A third vessel, Jag Vikram, remains near the Strait of Hormuz. The US-Israeli conflict with Iran has nearly halted shipping through the strait, but Green Asha and Green Sanvi have crossed the Gulf and are now in the eastern Strait of Hormuz, raising the total Indian-flagged LPG carriers through the strait to eight. India is managing its worst gas crisis in decades, with imports, which make up 60 per cent of demand, and domestic loading of stranded vessels underway. —*AGENCIES*

No unusual volatility in goods prices: Govt

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The government stated on Monday there is no "unusual volatility" in prices of essential commodities amid the West Asia crisis, and it is monitoring wholesale and retail markets across India. The Centre confirmed it has sufficient stocks of wheat and rice for the public distribution system (PDS) and emergencies, urging states to crack down on hoarding and black marketing. Wheat procurement has begun, with proactive measures in place. Anupam Mishra, Additional Secretary, said, "there has been no unusual volatility in prices of the essential commodities." The department is tracking prices of 40 commodities daily and updating data via a mobile app. —*PTI*

SC orders CBI probe into contracts linked to Arunachal CM's kin

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The Supreme Court directed the CBI to register a preliminary enquiry within two weeks into the award of contracts for public works in Arunachal Pradesh to firms allegedly owned by the family of Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

A bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath said on Monday that the investigation shall cover the award of public works in the state from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2025.

The bench directed the CBI to file a status report before it in the matter within 16 weeks.

During the hearing, the SC was told that government contracts around Rs 1,270 crore were awarded in the last 10 years in Arunachal to four firms linked to the family of Khandu.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioner NGOs Save Mon Region Federation and Voluntary Arunachal Sena, referred to an affidavit filed by Arunachal and argued that contracts were awarded to companies owned by the CM's family.

On 2 December 2025, the SC asked the Arunachal government to file an affidavit on contracts awarded from 2015 to 2025.

Khandu has been made a respondent in the PIL.

Pema Khandu's father Dorjee Khandu's second wife Rinchin Drema and his nephew Tsering Tashi have also been made parties in the case.

The plea claimed Drema's firm, Brand Eagles, was awarded a large number of government contracts.

Meanwhile, the Congress took a swipe at Prime Minister Modi on Monday saying that 'na khaunga na khane doonga' has been a "complete hoax." —*PTI*

Forensic team inspects after an SUV forced its way into Delhi Assembly premises and placed a flower bouquet outside Speaker's office —*PTI*

Masked man drives SUV into Delhi Assembly

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

A masked man drove an SUV through one of the boundary gates at the Delhi Assembly on Monday. The man placed a flower bouquet outside the Speaker's office and fled, triggering a high alert. Police later detained three people, including the driver, and seized the vehicle.

The car, bearing an Uttar Pradesh registration number, entered the Assembly premises after breaking through Gate Number 2 at around 2pm, officials said. Since it is not the main gate, security is scarce when the House is not in session.

The driver proceeded towards the office of Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta and placed a flower bouquet near the porch before rushing out in his vehicle," said a Delhi Secretariat official.

Police teams and bomb disposal squads rushed to the site and conducted a thorough sweep of the area to rule out any threat.

A sniffer dog inspects a flower bouquet —*PTI*

Special Commissioner of Police Ravindra Yadav reached the site soon after the incident and supervised the investigation.

Yadav said police reviewed CCTV footage to reconstruct the sequence of events.

After a committee was formed to track the vehicle and its occupants, a police officer confirmed, "Three people have been detained. The car was recovered, and the accused were caught in North Delhi." —*PTI*

Malda case: SC makes official apologise

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

In a strong indictment of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee led Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal, Supreme Court on Monday said the state administration failed to deal with the situation when seven judicial officials were gheraoed in Malda (in pic) and ordered the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to take over cases related to the matter.

The Supreme Court observed that the bureaucracy's credibility was being lowered and politics was being injected into the West Bengal secretariat and government offices.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi exercised its plenary power under Article 142 of the Constitution to transfer around 12 cases related to the 1 April incident, as rioting is not a scheduled offence under the NIA Act.

It pulled up West Bengal chief secretary Dushyant Nariala, told him to apologise to the Calcutta High Court chief justice for not taking his calls on the day of the incident and said, "Lower yourself a little bit so that the Calcutta High Court chief justice can reach you. Give your apology to him."

The bench told the chief secretary, "It is a sheer failure of the administration of West Bengal. What kind of credibility do the senior officers of the West Bengal bureaucracy have? It is being lowered. Politics is being brought into the state secretariat and government offices."

The bench directed the West Bengal police to hand over all the arrested 26 accused to the NIA saying the local police could not be trusted in the matter. —*PTI*

SC to not set deadlines on WB SIR appeals

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to to set any deadline for appellate tribunals to decide the appeals of the people whose names have been removed from the electoral rolls in West Bengal

About 55 per cent of the 60-lakh people whose names were removed from the electoral rolls stand excluded even after adjudication of claims and objections.

The court was hearing of petitions challenging the legality of the ongoing SIR in West Bengal.

Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the state, said that the appellate tribunals should pass interim orders for that prima facie found wrongly excluded.

However, the court said the electoral list needs to be frozen in view of the upcoming Assembly elections.

Meanwhile, SC directed the Election Commission (EC) to publish the final supplementary list for the first phase of the upcoming Assembly elections in West Bengal by Tuesday. —*PTI*

3 educationists move SC over NCERT row

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The three academics, who were barred from offering their expertise following the row over an NCERT book chapter containing "offending" contents on judicial corruption, approached the Supreme Court on Monday to explain their stand

They said no individual had the sole say in the drafting of the content and it was a collective process.

The apex court was told that the three experts, Michel Danion and his associates Suparna Diwakar and Alok Prasanna Kumar had a "lot of credibility". The counsel for Kumar said the academicians are trying to give a context and show the court the new pedagogy that has come as per the National Education Policy, including other issues.

The top court directed the application be taken on record and said it would hear them after two weeks.

The counsel for the Centre said that a committee has been constituted to review the contents of the revised chapter.

NCERT has reconstituted the National Syllabus and Teaching Learning Material Committee for the preparation of the national syllabus and teacher learning material. SC had directed the Centre to disassociate with the three experts involved in the drafting of the controversial chapter in NCERT's class 8 book. —*PTI*

8,600
complaints pf graft filed against sitting judges in 10 years.

Parl rejects Oppn notice to remove CEC Gyanesh

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla have rejected the Opposition's notice of motion seeking to remove Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. Nearly 193 MPs, including 130 from Lok Sabha and 63 from Rajya Sabha, submitted a 10-page notice on 12-13 March alleging partisan conduct, mass disenfranchisement during electoral roll revisions and misbehaviour. The Opposition cited issues with the Special Intensive Revision in West Bengal and voter deletions in Karnataka. Both Chairpersons refused to admit the motion, citing procedural and legal considerations, effectively blocking the move. —*SALAR NEWS*

9 TN cops get death term for killing man, son in judicial custody

MADURAI, 6 APRIL

J Beniks and his father P Jeyaraj —*x*

- The two were assaulted by the policemen. Beniks died at the Kovilpatti Government Hospital on 22 June 2020.

The Madurai First Additional District and Sessions Court sentenced the nine policemen convicted for murdering P Jeyaraj and his son J Beniks to death. The two were murdered in Sathankulam in Tuticorin district in 2020.

Jeyaraj and Beniks were taken to the Sathankulam police station on 19 June 2020 for keeping their shop open beyond the deadline during the Covid-19 lockdown.

The two were assaulted by the policemen. Beniks died at the Kovilpatti Government Hospital on 22 June 2020, while his father Jeyaraj died on 23 June 2020.

Judge G Muthukumaran sentenced the then inspector S Sridhar, SIs K Balakrishnan, P Raghu Ganesh, head constables S Murugan and A Samadurai, and constables M Muthuraja, S Chelladurai, X Thomas Francis and S Vailmuthu to death.

The 10th suspect, the then special SI, Paldurai, died of Covid-19 in August 2020.

The Madras HC took suo motu cognizance of the deaths on 24 June 2020.

On June 29, the HC handed over the case to CBI. After the Tuticorin principal district judge informed that personnel at the police station were not cooperating with the Kovilpatti judicial magistrate's inquiry, the high court directed the Tuticorin collector to take control of the police station and collect relevant materials. —*Agencies*

SAYS POLITICIANS UNFIT

Bommai declines honorary doctorate

BENGALURU, 6 APRIL

- Meanwhile, Karnataka Higher Education Minister MC Sudhakar proposed the constitution of an expert panel to regulate the awarding of honorary doctorates.

BJP MP and former Karnataka chief minister Basavaraj Bommai declined an honorary doctorate from Haveri University, saying it is not appropriate to confer such honours on politicians or those in self-motivated social service.

Bommai said honorary doctorates should be awarded to individuals who have rendered distinguished and significant service in a particular field over a long period.

"It is my personal view that it is not appropriate to confer honorary doctorates on politicians or those engaged in social service out of self-motivation. I request that this matter be reconsidered," Bommai said in a statement on Sunday night.

Bommai appreciated the offer, stating, "I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Syndicate members of Haveri University for deciding to confer an honorary doctorate on me." However, he informed the Vice-Chancellor that he will not accept the honour.

As I am engaged in public service, I do not seek any awards. I believe the love and trust of the people are the greatest honours," Bommei said.

Meanwhile, Karnataka Higher Education Minister MC Sudhakar proposed the constitution of an expert panel to regulate the awarding of honorary doctorates. Sudhakar highlighted the lack of standards in conferring such honours in a letter to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, who is also the Chancellor of public universities in the State. —*PTI*

B'luru techie drowns in Chikkamagaluru

C'MAGALURU, 6 APRIL

A 27-year-old IT professional from Bengaluru drowned in the Bhadra River near Bannur village in the Narasimharajapura (NR Pura) taluk of Chikkamagaluru district on Monday. The deceased Abhishek, a native of Gadag, was employed at an IT firm in Bengaluru. Abhishek had travelled to Bannur village near Balehonnur along with friends to attend a friend's wedding. The group was staying at a homestay. On Monday morning, he went for a swim in the Bhadra River. He was caught in a strong current and went missing. Fire and emergency personnel and local residents launched a search and his body was recovered from the river near Bannur village. —*Salar News*

Man killed in accident after wife's death

BELAGAVI, 6 APRIL

A man was killed in a road accident while on way to a hospital in connection with his wife's death after a suicide attempt, leaving their three children orphaned. The incident occurred on Monday in the Bailhongal taluk of Belagavi district. The woman, Madhuri, 30, from Avarolli village, had allegedly attempted suicide by consuming poison due to illness. She was treated at the Bailhongal Government Hospital and was later shifted to the District Hospital in Belagavi. However, she died on Monday.After informed of her death, her husband set out for the hospital on his bike. His vehicle collided head-on with a KSRTC bus near Avarolli cross resulting in his death —*Salar News*

Cattle theft foiled in Uttara Kannada, suspects escape

UTTARA KANNADA, 6 APRIL

An attempted cattle theft was thwarted by alert locals near Talageri in Jali village of Bhatkal taluk on Sunday. The incident was uncovered when miscreants tried to transport cattle in a white Swift car. Suspicion arose after residents heard distress sounds from the cattle, prompting them to intercept the vehicle. On confrontation, the accused abandoned the car and fled. Inside, locals found a mobile phone, and it's suspected the suspects used a fake number plate to conceal their identity. The accused initially hid in a nearby forest before contacting accomplices to escape. After villagers alerted police, the suspects fled again, abandoning a motorcycle. The incident has sparked outrage among residents, demanding immediate arrests —*Salar News*

Karnataka ranks 3rd at 'IndiaSkills 2025-26'

BENGALURU, 6 APRIL

Karnataka secured the third position at the IndiaSkills 2025-26 National Competition, held at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida recently.Represented by 48 competitors in 32 skills, the state earned 29 honours, finishing behind Odisha and TN. The competitions were in cloud computing, cyber security, mechatronics, additive manufacturing and bakery & visual merchandising.Capt. Kaustav Nath, state official and mentor for Team Karnataka, said the result was a stepping stone. The students trained by Karnataka Skill Development Corporation (KSDC) won 29 medals including 10 gold, 6 silver, 6 bronze and 7 medallions for excellence.Gold, silver and bronze medallists will now go for rigorous training to compete at the WorldSkills International in Shanghai. —*Salar News*

Cong will lose bypolls as per intelligence report: BJP

Claims Muslims will not vote for Congress in Davangere

BENGALURU, 6 APRIL

The BJP claimed that, according to the Congress government's Intelligence wing's report, the Congress is set to lose the by-elections in the two Assembly constituencies in Karnataka.

Expressing confidence of a big win in the by-polls, BJP leaders said the people would "teach a lesson" to the Congress.

"In Davanagere South, Muslims have decided not to vote for them, while in Bagalkot, there is infighting in the Congress candidate's family," the Leader of the Opposition, R Ashoka said on Monday.

He said the CM, who had gone to campaign in Kerala, rushed to Bagalkot after the Intelligence report indicating that the Congress could lose the by-polls.

"I want to ask the Congress why it is struggling in the by-elections when it makes big claims about development and its guarantees" he said.

Alleging "zero development" under the Congress rule, he said Siddaramaiah has made Karnataka a "debt state."

"There is no development, and the money under guarantee schemes is not being paid to beneficiaries on time," he added.

BJP leader R Ashoka with state BJP President BY Vijayendra —*PTI*

By-polls in Bagalkot and Davanagere South Assembly constituencies is being held on 9 April. The polls were necessitated by the deaths of senior Congress MLAs HY Meti and Shamanur Shivashankarappa.

State BJP president BY Vijayendra said the by-polls "disturbed Siddaramaiah's sleep."He said that for nearly three years, the Congress government, including the chief minister and ministers, had blamed the Centre for "hiding its failures."

Despite having an experienced CM who has presented a record 17 budgets, there is no development in the state, he claimed, adding that Siddaramaiah and his government have "completely forgotten" the AHINDA (Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes, and Dalits) communities.

Asserting that the people will not fall for the Congress's "allurements," he said the there is anger among voters towards the Congress government in the state. —*PTI*

Voters must defeat anti-people BJP in bypolls: Cong

BENGALURU, 6 APRIL

Calling the Centre "anti-people", KPCC Working President and MLC Manjunath Bhandari has urged voters, and even BJP workers, to defeat the party in the Davangere South and Bagalkot Assembly bypolls.

He blamed rising prices for widespread distress, saying LPG has surged from Rs 400 to over Rs 950, petrol from Rs 70 to Rs 102, and diesel from Rs 56 to Rs 96. He alleged gas shortages have forced hotel closures and made life difficult for auto drivers.

Bhandari criticised Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, urging him to secure Karnataka's pending 1.25 lakh crore tax share, along with 15th Finance Commission grants and funds for Jal Jeevan Mission and the Mahadayi project.

He praised leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa for developing Davanagere into an education hub, backing the Congress candidate Samarth Shamanur. —*Salar News*

POWER TUSSLE

High Command won't intervene, CM will continue: HM

MYSURU, 6 APRIL

Stating that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will continue in office as long as he enjoys the confidence of the high command, Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Monday said Siddaramaiah will continue in office till the Assembly's term is over.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Mysuru, the home minister said that there is no confusion regarding change of leadership in the state.

Siddaramaiah also gave a clarification in the Assembly that all Congress MLAs are eligible to become Chief Minister if they have the high command's permission.

The home minister also clarified that the by-poll results will not have any impact on the party. "People will support Congress candidates in Davangere South and Bagalkote by-polls. The Congress government has a clean image," he said.

He also expressed his displeasure on vindictive politics, provocative speech, and personal targeting.

On black marketing of LPG cylinders, he clarified that there is no disruption in the supply of domestic LPG.

"There is no provision for the police to book suo moto cases regarding black marketing of LPG. However, the police can take action as per the recommendations of food and civil supplies officials. LPG distributors must strictly adhere to government guidelines. Food Department officials have been directed to conduct stock inspection at distribution points. Strict action would be taken against black marketing of LPG. Essential services like anganwadis, schools, hospitals and government hostels must be prioritised in LPG distribution," he added. —*Salar News*

PROTEST AGAINST GOVERNOR

Kannada activists protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday, demanding the removal of Governor Thawarchand Gehlot, accusing him of favouring only Hindi language -*MOHAMMED ASAD*

Muniyappa to hold meet as LPG issue hits autos

BENGALURU, 6 APRIL

Karnataka Minister KH Muniyappa announced a meeting on 10 April to resolve the state's Auto LPG supply crisis. The discussion will prioritise restoring disrupted auto services in Bengaluru and other districts. while also including private sector representatives, Union government officials, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) coordinators, police, and senior state government officials.

According to official sources, Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) operated outlets, including those of IOC, are retailing Auto LPG at around Rs 89.52 per litre in Bengaluru, whereas private marketers are selling between Rs 99 and Rs 105 per litre. This price difference has led more customers to opt for the lower-priced PSU-operated stations, resulting in increased demand and longer wait times at these outlets.

Karnataka Minister KH Muniyappa at a meeting in Bengaluru —*PTI*

On Monday, the minister met with auto driver association representatives to hear their concerns. Muniyappa, who holds the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs portfolio, said, "About 3,000 Auto LPG cylinders are supplied daily by the Central government, but private suppliers have increased prices, causing inconvenience to auto drivers."

Noting the gravity of the ongoing conflict in West Asia, the minister described the situation as serious and called for universal cooperation. "The energy or fuel crisis is there across the world. If the Centre had planned to get the energy supplies from Russia a month in advance, this situation would not have arisen. Things have happened now. Let's try and resolve the issues," he added. —*PTI*

GBA orders towing operations, road repairs in Bengaluru

- He also instructed officials to procure one pothole-filling machine for each city corporation within the Greater Bengaluru Authority jurisdiction.

BENGALURU, 6 APRIL

The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) chief commissioner, Maheshwar Rao on Monday asked officials to commence towing operations from 7 April to remove abandoned vehicles that have been parked on city roads.

He also instructed officials to procure one pothole-filling machine for each city corporation within the Greater Bengaluru Authority jurisdiction. The commissioner chaired a coordination meeting with various departments under the GBA. The traffic police have also been instructed to strictly regulate parking on white-topped or concrete roads and other major roads, except in designated parking bays, He also directed that immediate repair work be undertaken in areas where roads have been cut by various departments but not properly restored. Permission for road cutting must be obtained through the 'MARCS' software system.

Rao stated that applications submitted by GAIL Gas for road cutting through the 'MARCS' software should be approved promptly. Rao said with the monsoon approaching, desilting of stormwater drains and roadside shoulder drains must be expedited to prevent waterlogging and related issues during the rainy season. Noting that multiple infrastructure works are ongoing at Hebbal Junction, the commissioner said all concerned departments have been directed to conduct a joint site inspection and prepare a comprehensive plan before convening a meeting. —*PTI*

BRAND BENGALURU?

Bengaluru, hailed as India's IT capital, struggles with mounting garbage. One of the worst hit places on Monday was 9th Main, Gurappanapalya in Jayanagar as piles of uncollected waste choked the area -*MOHAMMED ASAD*

AADHAAR ERROR

Mockery of my existence: Living woman declared dead

VIJAYNAGAR, 6 APRIL

A 45-year-old woman in Karnataka has been left without crucial government benefits after an Aadhaar-linked error wrongly declared her "dead" in official records.

N Hampamma, a resident of Dharmasagar village in Hosapete taluk, Vijayanagara district, has spent months visiting local offices to prove she is alive.

In India's increasingly digitised welfare system, Aadhaar is mandatory for accessing schemes. However, Hampamma says the same system has failed her. "I tried to prove I am alive using Aadhaar itself," she told Salar News, expressing frustration at repeated bureaucratic runarounds. "Officials tell me to go from one office to another. It feels like a mockery of my existence."

N Hampamma, a resident of Dharmasagar village, has spent months visiting local offices to prove she is alive—*SALAR*

The error has caused severe distress and halted benefits, including payments under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme for the past year. Her farmer ID has reportedly expired, and even housing applications have been rejected as the system lists her as deceased.

Officials attribute the issue to a technical glitch. Hosapete Tahsildar Shruti Gowda told Salar News that another woman with the same name died in 2021, and Hampamma's Aadhaar number was mistakenly linked to that record on the e-Janma portal. Authorities claim most benefits remain active and have assured a resolution within days.

The Upa Lokayukta has taken suo motu cognisance, calling it an "administrative failure" and issuing notices to local officials. They must respond by 20 May, 2026. —*Salar News*

KSOU registrar's appointment cancelled in just 2 days

MYSURU, 6 APRIL

The Karnataka government on Monday abruptly withdrew its Saturday order appointing senior KAS officer S Kusuma Kumari as the registrar of Karnataka State Open University (KSOU), in Mysuru.

The cancellation, which occurred just two days after the initial announcement and just before Kumari was set to take charge, has triggered widespread speculation. Sources claim that senior KSOU officials were opposed to her appointment.

With the state government freezing its bank accounts due to irregularities, the KSOU in Mysuru is facing a severe financial crisis during the months of March and April. This has resulted in the KSOU salary accounts being frozen, which has impacted its day-to-day administration and also hindered the KSOU staff's salary payments.

These budget approvals for 2026-27 were delayed following a tussle between KSOU and the State Government. With no official clarification from the government, the reason remains unclear, adding to the uncertainty within the KSOU administration. —*Salar News*

Cong still singing to Pak's tune: Modi

PM says Uniform Civil Code & 'One Nation, One Election' are BJP's unfinished agendas

BARPETA/HOJAI/ DIBRUGARH/NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that while his government carried out 'Operation Sindoor', the Congress continued to "sing to the tune of" Pakistan.

Addressing back-to-back election rallies in Barpeta, Hojai and Dibrugarh in Assam, Modi also accused the Congress of taking a myopic view on development, while asserting that the BJP focuses on long-term growth.

"The party always took short-term measures so that they could indulge in corruption. But the BJP looks far ahead while taking decisions for all-around development of all sections of society," he said.

The PM alleged that during the 2016 surgical strikes or the 2025 'Operation Sindoor', the Congress has always sung to Pakistan's tune, giving importance to their agenda.

Modi also accused the Congress of neglecting the Army by refusing to implement the 'One Rank, One Pension' for the veterans for decades. "But the BJP government ensured that justice was done to those who protect the nation by giving them this benefit," he said, adding that so far, Rs 1.24 lakh crore has been disbursed to the bank accounts of veterans. Modi accused the Gandhi family of indulging in dynastic politics and corruption.

Additionally, Modi said the "mission is still ongoing" for implementing the BJP's two key agendas, the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and 'One Nation, One Election', with serious discussions underway and positive progress made.

Under the 'One Nation, One Election' system, the Modi government proposes to conduct simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The UCC seeks to create the same set of laws for everyone across the country, irrespective of religion, especially with regard to marriage and adoption. —PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting ahead of the Assembly elections, in Barpeta, Assam, on Monday —PTI

Don't let Himanta contest: Cong to EC; Sarma slams 'lies'

GUWAHATI, 6 APRIL

The Congress filed a complaint with the Election Commission (EC) on Monday, demanding the cancellation of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's candidature, for "hiding" his wife's alleged offshore assets in the poll affidavit.

Congress Media and Publicity Chairman Pawan Khera had alleged that Sarma's wife has three passports of the UAE, Egypt and Antigua-Barbuda, two properties in Dubai and assets in shell companies in the US. Sarma has denied the charge.

In the complaint filed by Sarma's opponent in the Jalukbari constituency, Bidisha Neog, the Congress also demanded an inquiry into "suppression of information" about the offshore assets.

She mentioned two properties allegedly owned by Sarma's wife and said the "deliberate non-disclosure" violates the mandatory requirements, and it renders the nomination liable to rejection.

Meanwhile, Lok Sabha MP Gaurav Gogoi challenged Sarma to deny the claims under oath on the Bhagavad Gita. He said that if the Congress comes to power, it would pursue investigations into Sarma's alleged undisclosed foreign holdings and business operations. —PTI

Congress leader Pawan Khera with Assam Pradesh Congress Committee President Gaurav Gogoi —PTI

> **The allegations are completely baseless, based on fabricated documents ... I am concerned that they took the help of Pakistan. This is not a simple fraud case but a crime against the nation.**
>
> - Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam Chief Minister

T'gana CM lays stone for ₹225 cr Basara temple

— PTI

HYDERABAD, 6 APRIL

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy performed 'bhumi puja' (foundation-laying ceremony) for development works worth Rs 225 crore at the Goddess Saraswathi temple in Nirmal district. Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, along with ministers, MLAs, and leaders, was present. Reddy, accompanied by family, offered special prayers at Basara temple. He reviewed development plans on 4 April, instructing that works follow 'shastras' and emphasising wide roads for devotees and only electric vehicles within the temple. Reddy also directed regulations to preserve the temple's sanctity. The ceremony marks a significant step in the temple's development. —PTI

BJP 47th Founding Day: Nitin calls for 'Viksit Bharat'

— ANI

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

BJP President Nitin Nabin called on party workers to dedicate themselves to fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047 on the 47th Foundation Day. He urged the party to expand its footprint, inspired by leaders' sacrifice. Nabin said, "Let's move forward with a resolve to build a Viksit Bharat and fulfil the dream of waiving 'bhagwa' from panchayat to Parliament." He paid tribute to former presidents and workers, highlighting the party's growth rooted in its ideological origins from Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Recalling past struggles, he emphasised the dedication of workers. Modi's address provided a roadmap for the future, he added. —PTI

AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami files his nomination for the Edappadi Assembly constituency, in Salem, on Monday —PTI

'TN will never accept Hindi imposition'

THANJAVUR, 6 APRIL

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Monday hit out at Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for criticising Chief Minister M K Stalin on the language row.

He said the state will never accept the three-language formula, but will follow the dual language policy of Tamil and English.

Claiming that the Centre was forcing Tamil Nadu to implement the National Education Policy, paving the way for thrusting Hindi upon the state.

"We will never accept it. We will always follow the two-language policy of Tamil and English," Udhayanidhi said while campaigning for the DMK candidate Durai Chandrasekaran in Thiruvaiyaru. He appealed to the party members and public to ensure an overwhelming win for Chandrasekaran for sixth time from Thiruvaiyaru. "I promise that I will take up his case with CM Stalin and elevate him as state minister if you make him emerge victorious in the 23 April election by a hefty victory margin of 50,000 votes," he said as the crowd cheered. —PTI

Rahul calls Vijayan, Modi 'arrogant'

THRISSUR/KANNUR, 6 APRIL

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday termed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan as "arrogant", alleging that they have a mindset of ruling over people rather than working with them.

Addressing an election rally at Mala here, Gandhi said the Assembly polls in Kerala were a fight between the Congress-led UDF and the ruling LDF, which he alleged was being indirectly supported by the BJP.

"There is a hidden hand helping the LDF against the UDF," he said, adding that even CPI(M) workers would admit that the government was not functioning as a true Left administration.

Referring to the LDF poll poster "Who else", he said the chief minister is not a God that he alone can rule Kerala. There are thousands of talented people including women. He termed the slogan a "disrespect" to the people of the state and "the height of arrogance".

Meanwhile, Congress MP from Wayanad Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, addressing a corner meeting in Peravoor, accused the ruling LDF of "compromising" on ideology, accountability, and responsibility in order to remain in power for 10 years.

The LDF chose to make a deal with the BJP, which "harasses" the minorities, especially the Christian community and their nuns, she claimed. She alleged arrogance had crept in LDF government.

Despite the massive theft in Sabarimala, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose not to utter a single word against it, Vadra alleged, and pointed it out as evidence for the deal. —PTI

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacts with youngsters, in Palakkad, Kerala, on Monday —PTI

> **Modi Ji had said: 'We (Modi-govt) will handle the LPG gas crisis just like we handled Covid. And indeed, that is exactly what he did. Precisely like Covid - devoid of policy, full of grand announcements, and placing the entire burden upon the poor**
>
> - Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

Probationary SI booked for assaulting SHO

Police filed a case against probationary Sub-Inspector Krishna Mohan and two others for allegedly manhandling the Station House Officer (SHO) outside the PM Modi rally venue in Thiruvalla. The incident occurred on the evening of 4 April at the Municipal Stadium, where Sreelal Chandrasekharan, SHO of Koduman police station, was deployed at the entrance. Mohan, not on duty, arrived with two others and insisted on entering. When entry was denied, a scuffle ensued, and Mohan reportedly manhandled Chandrasekharan and tore his badge. An internal inquiry is ongoing. —PTI

'PM must quit over Pak threat to Kolkata'

BETHUADAHARI, 6 APRIL

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday asked why Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not raise Pakistan's threat to attack Kolkata, during his poll rallies in West Bengal a day earlier.

"When Pakistan's Defence Minister says they will attack Kolkata, why didn't Modi say that 'we will take strong action'?" she asked.

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif had warned India that it would respond with a strike in Kolkata to any "future misadventures".

"If India tries to stage any false flag operation, we will take it to Kolkata," Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addresses a public meeting ahead of the Assembly polls, in Nadia, West Bengal, on Monday —PTI

FIR LODGED AGAINST TMC BEHALA PASCHIM CANDIDATE

Kolkata Police has lodged an FIR against TMC candidate from Behala Paschim Assembly constituency Ratna Chattopadhyay and six others in connection with alleged vandalism in Parnasree of south Kolkata.

The case was registered after BJP leader Manoj Halder lodged a complaint against Chattopadhyay and others.

He alleged that seven TMC workers wrongfully restrained him and others, physically assaulted one of his associates, and stole laptops and other materials from their party office.

BJP's Behala Paschim candidate Indranil Khan also lodged a complaint with the police, alleging that TMC workers vandalised the party's election office. There was no reaction from Chattopadhyay or the TMC on the allegations.

Polling in the Behala Paschim Assembly constituency, located in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district, is scheduled on 29 April. —PTI

SC asks artist Nandalal's grandson to move Tribunal over SIR deletion

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Monday asked **Suprabuddha Sen**, the 88-year-old grandson of legendary artist Nandalal Bose, to approach the Appellate Tribunal after his name was deleted from the voters' list during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound West Bengal.

The bench granted the petitioner liberty to challenge the deletion before the Appellate Tribunal. The court requested the tribunal to decide the matter expeditiously.

Senior advocate DS Naidu, appearing for the Election Commission, assured the court that the commission would provide all necessary assistance to the tribunal to ensure a swift resolution.

Representing the octogenarian, senior advocate Jaideep Gupta apprised the bench of the applicant's plight, highlighting the irony of a descendant of the Constitution's illustrator being deprived of his fundamental right to vote. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul Pancholi heard the matter.

On 2 April, the top court permitted Motab Shaikh, a probable Congress candidate in Bengal, to approach the newly constituted Appellate Tribunal in Kolkata against the deletion of his name from the electoral rolls.

Local Congress leader had sought restoration of his name and permission to file nomination papers for the upcoming elections. Bose was a pioneer of modern Indian art and is celebrated for illustrating the original manuscript of the Constitution and creating the iconic Haripura posters. —PTI

AMID 'UNOPPOSED POLL' APPEALS

May quit Baramati bypoll if Ajit crash FIR filed: Cong

MUMBAI/PUNE, 6 APRIL

The Maharashtra Congress on Monday said it will consider withdrawing from the Baramati assembly bypoll if a FIR is registered in the plane crash that killed former deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar.

Party spokesperson Atul Londhe, in a statement, rejected claims that the 23 April by-election should be held unopposed, and accused the BJP of adopting a "convenient" political stance.

The Congress on Sunday fielded its state unit secretary, Akash More, against Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar for the Baramati bypoll, necessitated due to the death of sitting Nationalist Congress Party MLA and then deputy CM Ajit Pawar in a plane crash in the constituency on 28 January.

Then deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar died in a plane crash on 28 January, following which his wife Sunetra was made the DyCM —PTI

The party raised concern over the circumstances surrounding Ajit Pawar's death and noted that the family has demanded a probe into the matter, and Sunetra Pawar had sought an inquiry by the CBI.

In Pune, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Sunetra Pawar on Monday filed her nomination papers for the ensuing bypoll. Earlier, in an emotional appeal to the people of Baramati she urged them to stand by her in the same way as they always supported her late husband Ajit Pawar.

Sunetra Pawar said she was committed to carrying forward his legacy of development.

She described Ajit Pawar's demise as a "profound loss" not just for her family but for the entire state, she said.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant hit out at the Shiv Sena (UBT) over the latter's accusation in an editorial in mouthpiece Samna that the grand old party was using regional outfits as "crutches", and not treating them as "equal stakeholders" in the Opposition alliance.

He said in an alliance like the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), all constituent parties have their own views, which must be discussed before making announcements. —PTI

19 new elected Rajya Sabha members take oath

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

NCP-SCP leader Sharad Pawar and Union Minister Ramdas Athawale were among 19 new Rajya Sabha members who took oath here on Monday.

The oath was taken in the presence of Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan. Deputy Chairman Harivansh and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju were present during the ceremony in the Rajya Sabha chamber.

The newly elected members comprised five from Maharashtra, six from Tamil Nadu, five from West Bengal and three from Odisha.

Maya Chintaman Ivnate of the BJP unit in Maharashtra was the first to take the oath, followed by Pawar, who arrived in a wheelchair.

Ramrao Sakharam Wadkute (BJP), Jyoti Nagnath Waghmare (SS) and Athawale (RPI-A) also took oath as members representing Maharashtra in the Upper House.

Manmohan Samal (BJP), Sanrupt Mishra (BJD) and Dilip Kumar Ray (Ind) took oath as members from Odisha, while Constandine Ravindran (DMK), Christopher Manickam (Congress), L K Sudhish (DMDK), M Thambidurai (AIADMK), Tiruchi Siva (DMK) and Ambumani Ramadoss (PMK) took oath as members representing Tamil Nadu.

From West Bengal, Babul Supriya Baral (AITC), Biswajit Sinha (BJP), Menaka Guruswamy (AITC), Rajeev Kumar (AITC) and Rukmini Mallik (AITC) took oath.

Most members took oath in their respective regional languages. —PTI

— PTI

Ferozepur court, DU colleges get bomb threats

FEROZEPUR, 6 APRIL

The district court complex in Ferozepur received a bomb threat via email in the morning, later confirmed as a hoax. The message warned of an explosive device planted on the premises. Bomb disposal squads, dog units, and police evacuated the court as a precaution. Senior officials, including Superintendent Dharamvir Singh and DSP Sukhwinder Singh, inspected the site; no suspicious items were found. Bar Council president Advocate Lovjeetpal Singh Turna recounted, "I appealed to advocates and clerks to vacate the area for a thorough check." Similarly, Ramjas and Miranda House colleges of Delhi University received bomb threat emails, prompting evacuation and searches, but no threats were confirmed. —*PTI*

— PTI

CRPF jawan injured in IED blast in West Singhbhum

CHAIBASA, 6 APRIL

A CRPF CoBRA battalion jawan was injured in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district following an IED explosion planted by CPI (Maoists). The incident happened during a joint anti-Maoist operation in Saranda forest under Chotanagra police station. Superintendent of Police Amit Renu confirmed that the IED, planted by Maoists, exploded, injuring Manoj Kumar, who sustained minor injuries. His condition is stable. A large-scale combing operation is underway to apprehend Maoist squad leader Misir Besra, who has a bounty of Rs one crore. Security forces aim to make the district naxal-free. —*PTI*

Thane court jails 3 Bangladeshis for 14 months

THANE, 6 APRIL

Three Bangladeshi nationals were sentenced to 14 months in jail by a Thane court for illegal stay in India. Additional Sessions Judge RS Bhakare, in a judgment delivered on 1 April, however, discharged them from provisions of the Foreigners Act. Jahid Aainal Khan, 23, Sapna Madan Sikdar, 31, and Juithi Jahangir Dhali, 25, were convicted under Passport (Entry into India) Rules 1950 after they voluntarily pleaded guilty. "There is no material on record to show that the place where accused were found is notified as a restricted area. Hence, charge under Section 14A of Foreigners Act is not made out," the order said. The court directed that the three be deported to Bangladesh after serving their sentences. —*PTI*

Public lynches three suspected dacoits in Assam

NAGAON, 6 APRIL

At least three suspected dacoits were lynched and another critically injured by villagers in Assam's Nagaon district on Monday, police said. Nagaon ASP (Crime) Abotani Doley told PTI that the incident took place at No. 1 Kathpara village in Kalabar co-district. "Around 2am, a gang of 10-12 armed dacoits entered a house. They tied the hands of the owners, kept the six-year-old daughter at knife point, and looted cash and jewellery," he added. When the dacoits were fleeing, neighbours came out. The crowd then caught four dacoits, police said. The three dead are Saifullah, Ajibur and Enamul Haque, police said. —*PTI*

SC refuses to intervene in order on Adani's JAL buy

Vedanta had sought a stay citing lack of transparency

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The Supreme Court did not interfere with the order of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), which had refused to stay Adani Group's Rs 14,535 crore bid to acquire Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL).

The bench, however, restrained the monitoring committee of the ailing JAL from taking any major policy decision without prior nod of the NCLAT.

The SC asked mining giant Vedanta Ltd and successful resolution applicant, Adani Enterprises Ltd, to raise their contentions and counter-claims before NCLAT, which will commence final hearing on the row on 10 April.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi asked NCLAT to decide the plea and the counter petition on the dispute over the acquisition of JAL by the Adani group expeditiously.

Earlier, Vedanta Ltd moved the SC seeking a stay on the order approving Adani Group's Rs 14,535 crore bid to acquire Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL).

Vedanta had moved the SC seeking a stay on the order approving Adani Group's Rs 14,535 crore bid to acquire Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) —*ANI*

Vedanta filed its appeal on 25 March, a day after NCLAT refused to stay the plan's implementation.

The insolvency appellate tribunal declined on 24 March any interim stay over the Vedanta Group's plea against the order passed by NCLAT approving the Adani Group's bid for acquiring JAL.

The NCLAT's two-member bench sought a response from the Committee of Creditors (CoC) of JAL within a week. It also directed to list the matter on 10 April for the next hearing.

Vedanta group was in the race to acquire JAL through an insolvency process, but its lenders approved the resolution plan of Adani Enterprises Ltd in November 2025. The NCLT approved the Adani Group's bid. — *PTI*

Home Secretary called over CCTVs in police stations

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The Supreme Court has asked the Union home secretary to remain present before it on Tuesday so that appropriate assistance could be drawn from him in implementing the scheme for installing CCTVs in police stations.

Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta passed the order on Monday while hearing a suo motu case over the lack of functional CCTVs in police stations.

Senior advocate Siddhartha Dave, who is assisting the SC as amicus curiae, told the bench that most states have installed CCTVs and they are setting up centralised dashboards. — *PTI*

PLEA AGAINST KERALA TUNNEL REJECTED

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The SC dismissed a plea on Monday challenging the environmental clearance granted to the Kozhikode-Wayanad tunnel in Kerala, saying that the project will be a lifeline for the state.

Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi refused to interfere with the Kerala HC's order in 2025 dismissing a plea by the Wayanad Prakrithi Samrakshana Samithi, which challenged the construction of the twin tube tunnel corridor. But the SC allowed the NGO to approach the Green Tribunal if there was any violation of the conditions of the Environmental Clearance (EC). — *PTI*

2020 RIOTS: COPS GET 2 WEEKS TO REPLY

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The SC on Monday granted two more weeks to the Delhi Police to file its response on the bail pleas of Tasleem Ahmed and Abdul Khalid Saifi, accused in the February 2020 riots-related "larger conspiracy" case.

Justices Aravind Kumar and PB Varale gave time after the counsel for Delhi Police sought it. The SC on 11 February had issued a notice on a plea filed by Ahmed and Saifi challenging the Delhi High Court order.

The high court on 2 September 2025 had dismissed Ahmed's bail plea, saying "delay in trial" cannot be the sole ground for consideration. — *PTI*

WEST ASIA WAR

Sailor's remains reach home

MUMBAI, 6 APRIL

The mortal remains of 25-year-old seafarer Dixit Solanki, killed in a suspected drone boat attack off the Oman coast last month during the West Asia war, have reached Mumbai, the National Union of Seafarers of India (NUSI) said on Monday.

Dixit's father Amratlal Solanki and sister Mitali Solanki received the remains at the cargo terminal of Mumbai airport on Sunday, a NUSI member told PTI.

The development came three days after Amritlal and Mitali approached the Bombay High Court, seeking the return of the mortal remains.

Dixit Solanki—*ANI*

Their petition sought directions to the Centre to expedite the repatriation of the victim's remains claiming lack of clarity from the authorities. Dixit Solanki was killed on 4 March when an explosive-laden drone boat struck an oil tanker off Oman.

The Solankis have demanded that all investigation and forensic records to be shared with them.

Their petition claimed that the family struggled to get clear answers despite writing several emails to the company that owned the vessel. — *PTI*

INDIAN ENVOY MEETS BANGLADESH PM

Indian envoy Pranay Verma met Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to discuss strengthening ties —*PTI*

DHAKA/NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Indian envoy Pranay Verma on Monday met Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and conveyed New Delhi's intent to pursue "positive," "constructive," ties with Dhaka.

The meeting came as India and Bangladesh are making efforts to rebuild ties after Rahman became prime minister following his Bangladesh Nationalist Party's victory in February parliamentary polls.

The ties between the two came under strain during the tenure of Bangladesh's government headed by Yunus. During the meeting, Verma and Rahman "discussed engagement with focus on domains aligned with the priorities of the two countries," the Indian High Commission said in an X post. — *PTI*

Will argue my own case: Kejri seeks HC judge's recusal

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal appeared in person at Delhi High Court on Monday, seeking the recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma from hearing CBI petition challenging his and others' discharge in the liquor policy case.

Kejriwal alleged that prior observations made by Justice Sharma indicated she was not impartial in matters related to the Excise Policy. He pointed to past cases where the Supreme Court set aside orders passed by the same judge regarding the same excise case.

Justice Sharma recorded Kejriwal's application and listed it for hearing on 13 April, after being informed that a Supreme Court plea for transferring the case to another bench had been withdrawn. Applications for recusal were also filed by AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Durgesh Pathak, as well as other discharged accused including Vijay Nair and Arun Ramchandra Pillai.

AAP Convener Arvind Kejriwal arrives at the Delhi High Court to appear in connection with the liquor scam case on Monday —*PTI*

The court granted Kejriwal and others until 10 April to file responses to the main CBI plea, terming it a "last and final opportunity."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the CBI, criticised Kejriwal's move as "theatrics" and described the allegations against the institution as "frivolous and contemptuous." He noted that seven discharged accused had filed recusal applications as part of a "well thought out design."

The case stems from the trial court's February 2026 discharge of Kejriwal, Sisodia, and 21 others, which the CBI has challenged, prompting scrutiny by Justice Sharma. —*PTI*

EPSTEIN LINKS

Plea against Puri's daughter rejected

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The Delhi High Court on Monday rejected an activist's appeal against an order directing him to take down social media content linking Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri's daughter to convicted American sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. It asked him to air his grievances before the single judge who had passed the order.

Justices Vivek Chaudhary and Renu Bhatnagar told the single judge to finally decide the issue of whether to continue or vacate its interim order as expeditiously as possible.

The court granted the appellant Kunal Shukla a week to file a reply to Himayani Puri's injunction application before the single judge.

"Let the matter be placed before the single judge on 23 April. The single judge will decide the injunction application or vacation of stay application finally after hearing the parties as expeditiously as possible uninfluenced by any of the observations," the court said. Shukla alleged in his appeal that on 17 March the single judge passed a blanket gag order and restrained him from publishing the content in question on social media platforms without giving him time to reply.

The appeal said Shukla had published only "interrogative content" on social media, which was based on publicly available documents, including international reports and officially released material, and raised questions of public importance. — *PTI*

Amit Jogi gets lifer for NCP leader's murder

RAIPUR, 6 APRIL

The Chhattisgarh High Court has sentenced Amit Jogi, son of former chief minister Ajit Jogi, to life imprisonment for the 2003 murder of NCP leader Ramavatar Jaggi, observing that he was the "mastermind" and "driving force" behind the conspiracy.

A division bench of Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha and Justice Arvind Kumar Verma, in its 2 April order, set aside a trial court's 2007 judgment acquitting Amit Jogi, holding it as "palpably illegal, wrong, perverse and contrary to the evidence on record".

A copy of the order passed on 2 April was made available on Monday.

The high court convicted Amit Jogi under sections 302 (murder) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced him to life imprisonment.

The court also imposed a fine of Rs 1,000, with an additional six months' imprisonment in case of default.Jaggi was shot while travelling in his car under Moudhapara police station limits in Raipur on 4 June, 2003. He succumbed to his injuries at a hospital the next day.

The CBI said Jaggi was organising an NCP rally in Raipur on 10 June, 2003, which was perceived as a political threat to the Jogis. —*PTI*

UP cop suspended for terming AK-47, grenades as 'toys'

BIJNOR, 6 APRIL

A police officer who had given a clean chit in a case involving a viral video showing the alleged display of an AK-47 rifle and hand grenades has been suspended, while a circle officer has been removed from his post, officials said on Monday.

Superintendent of Police Abhishek Jha said the action was taken after fresh findings contradicted the earlier investigation, which had termed the weapons seen in the video as toys.

According to police, the video had surfaced in November last year from Sofatpur village of Bijnor district.

In the footage, a man identified as Aqib, from Meerut district and currently based in Dubai, was purportedly seen displaying an AK-47 rifle and hand grenades.

Following the video's circulation, Sub-Inspector Vinod Kumar of Nangal police station registered a case. However, the then station house officer and investigating officer, Satyendra Singh, recorded Aqib's statement and filed a final report concluding that the weapons shown in the video were toys, effectively giving him a clean chit.

Police said recent developments have revealed some suspicious links to Aqib.

The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) is now probing the matter further.

Superintendent of Police Jha said Satyendra Singh has been suspended, and Circle Officer Nitesh Pratap Singh has also been removed from his post in connection with the case. —*PTI*

7 NDF MEN CLEARED IN KERALA CPI(M) WORKER'S MURDER

KANNUR, 6 APRIL

A court on Monday acquitted seven National Democratic Front activists in a case related to the alleged murder of a former CPI(M) worker in 2008. Thalassery Additional Sessions Court Judge Philip Thomas acquitted the accused in the case pertaining to the death of former CPI(M) activist UK Salim at Hussanmotta on 23 July, 2008.

The acquitted persons are CK Latheef, KC Latheef, PP Abdulla, Zakeer Hussain, P Nazer, TP Muhammad Hisan and Sabil PC. The prosecution said Salim was killed following a clash over the removal of a CPI(M) poster. However, last year, Salim's father raised doubts, alleging that his son may have been killed by CPI(M) activists, a claim he also submitted before the court, a police official said. —*PTI*

- The murdered Salim's father later alleged that his son may have been killed by CPI(M) activists

MINDLESS CRUELTY

Man beats 6-yr-old for stealing guavas

UNA, 6 APRIL

A six-year-old migrant girl was allegedly kept tied to the stairs and beaten as punishment for plucking guavas from an ex-serviceman's garden in Himachal Pradesh's Una district, officials said on Monday. Purported videos of the torture spread widely and sparked outrage, bringing it to the notice of the administration. The victim has been rescued and sent for a medical check-up, they said.

The ex-serviceman, who is accused of hitting the girl while she was kept tied to the stairs of his house on Sunday, has been called for questioning by the police and the Child Welfare Committee on Monday. A video has surfaced in which he apologises.

The ex-serviceman, accused of hitting the girl has been called for questioning by the police and the Child Welfare Committee —*SCREENGRAP*

The administration sprang into action after a video of the incident went viral on social media following which a case was registered, police said.

The incident came to light when Rohit Jaswal, a Merchant Navy captain, was passing by and saw the girl tied to a staircase inside a house, and he immediately rushed to intervene. Jaswal asked the ex-serviceman to release the girl, but he refused. Later, some youths recorded the girl tied up in his house..

A video shows the man justifying tying up the girl, saying she was being punished for "stealing" guava. Amid cries, the girl is seen pleading with the passerby shooting the video to "save her." —*PTI*

New law may force trans people into shadows

The amended transgender law has triggered fears of "regular surveillance" among members of the community, with many worrying that they could be repeatedly subjected to scrutiny, harassment, and even stripping in the name of verification.

For many transgender persons, activists say, the anxiety is not limited to appearing before a medical board for certification. They fear that with self-identification now abolished under the amended law; they could be forced to repeatedly "prove" their gender identity before police, employers, hospitals and other authorities.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, was passed by Parliament on 25 March and received President Droupadi Murmu's assent on 30 March.

Ritu, a non-binary transfeminine person, said the law could subject transgender persons to scrutiny and harassment at every stage of life. "Not just the medical panel, but also the way it criminalises trans folks — they could be stripped or harassed by police," she said.

"Any day, someone can challenge your identity at work, in a hospital or elsewhere. This is not a one-time process; it is a regular surveillance that the community has faced for centuries," she told PTI.

A top government functionary, however, defended the new certification process, arguing that self-identification could be misused and that some form of verification is necessary. "Imagine someone having raped a woman and telling the police that he is a self-declared transgender and therefore he can't rape," the government functionary said.

Speaking to PTI, Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, the first transgender person from the Asia-Pacific region to address the United Nations General Assembly, said a petition has been filed in the Supreme Court to fight for the community's rights, aiming to ensure that the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) judgment is implemented.

The 2014 NALSA judgment, a landmark Supreme Court decision recognising transgender people as the "third gender" in India, had upheld the right to self-identify as male, female, or third gender without medical testing, affirming fundamental rights to equality and dignity under Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21 of the Constitution.

NCP(SP) leader Anish Gawande criticised the requirement of certification by medical boards and district authorities.

Speaking to PTI, Gawande, who is the first gay national spokesperson of a political party in the country, said, "We have thousands of other crises to deal with, but you want a district magistrate and a district medical officer to sit around and certify who is a transgender and who is not. Why is the government obsessed with what is between somebody's legs?"

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, was passed by Parliament on 25 March and received President Droupadi Murmu's assent on 30 March —*PTI*

Gawande said he had been receiving calls from transgender persons fearful about their future. "The number of phone calls I've received over the last week from people who are scared — ki mera kya hoga, mujhe police arrest kar degi kya, main agar transgender hoon toh mujhe surgery karwane hi padegi kya? (What will happen to me? Will the police arrest me? If I am transgender, do I necessarily have to do surgery?) These are real concerns that people have shared," he said, adding, "This is creating a mental health crisis and also driving people to suicide."

Citing the story of Kabir Mann, a Dalit Transman who has obtained all necessary certifications to become a teacher but failed to land a job, Gawande said the amended law could block thousands of transgender persons from accessing education and employment.

"When documents don't match a person's gender identity, opportunities vanish, and people are forced back into secrecy. For many, this could push them into begging or sex work, the only spaces where identification is not questioned," he said.

Meera Parida, transgender activist and a BJD politician, told PTI that the community was deeply disturbed by the sudden passage of the Bill, noting that it contradicted international guidelines on gender equality and the principles of "leaving no one behind", as well as fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution.

She expressed hope that Prime Minister Narendra Modi would hear the community's concerns and take corrective action.

Parida said concerns over misuse of the certification process were overstated, noting that every community has good and bad people, and anyone committing fraud or a crime should face existing legal consequences.

> Several MPs, including Amar Pal Maurya (BJP), Renuka Chowdhury (Congress), Fauziya Khan (NCP-SP), Manoj Kumar Jha (RJD), Saket Gokhale (TMC) and Tiruchi Siva (DMK), opposed the Bill.

"The possibility of misuse cannot justify targeting the entire transgender community," she said.

The UN Human Rights Council has expressed concern over the passage of the Bill, saying it may undermine the hard-won rights of transgender people. "We regret the fast passage of the Bill, without adequate stakeholder consultation. The amendments risk setting back hard-won rights of transgender people, replacing self-identification with mandatory medical verification processes."

The amendment to the law has stirred a hornet's nest, leaving the community in turmoil. Many feel that all the progress achieved after the repeal of Article 377 — which effectively decriminalised consensual homosexual acts — has been undone, with some regretting coming out. Trans persons from lower socio-economic backgrounds face little choice but to return to sex work or begging.

Rights activist Yogita Bhayana told PTI that the amended law violates the Supreme Court's NALSA judgment, forcing the community to restart their struggle. She warned that the law could push some transgender persons back into begging or sex work, undoing efforts to integrate the community into the mainstream and forcing the battle for inclusion to begin anew.

Bhayana also questioned the need for the medical certification process, calling it a "futile exercise."

"Internally, what you feel for your own gender is what is important. Medical examinations might not say anything. It should be a self-declared column in any document; it should be the individual's choice, not something that requires medical backing," she told PTI.

Talking to PTI, CPI(M) General Secretary MA Baby strongly criticised the amended law, calling it "highly objectionable" and "inhuman". He said, "It is unfortunate that the government has rushed through this Bill without listening to demands by the Opposition."

He also feared that the amended law could force transgender persons back into secrecy, and in some cases, into begging or sex work. "There are possibilities of such highly unfortunate situations developing," Baby said.

Meanwhile, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Virendra Kumar had said the amended Bill focuses on protecting those facing discrimination due to biological factors and ensures continued legal recognition for transgender persons.

Several MPs, including Amar Pal Maurya (BJP), Renuka Chowdhury (Congress), Fauziya Khan (NCP-SP), Manoj Kumar Jha (RJD), Saket Gokhale (TMC) and Tiruchi Siva (DMK), opposed the Bill.

Jaya Bachchan (SP), Abdul Wahab (IUML), Fauzia Khan (NCP-SCP), Priyanka Chaturvedi (Shiv Sena-UBT) and Tiruchi Siva (DMK) had urged the government to refer the Bill to a select committee for stakeholder inputs. —*PTI*

SALAR سالار

Rangasamy eyes 5th-term as Puducherry CM

BALLOT BUZZ

While the campaign for the Assembly polls has reached a feverish pitch, AINRC founder and Puducherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy is a picture of poise.

Clad in speckless white dhoti and a kurta-like long shirt, 75-year-old Rangasamy remains all smiles as he goes door-to-door seeking votes and makes it a point to distribute pamphlets on achievements himself.

A four-time Chief Minister, he is a bachelor and law graduate, and he is contesting from the two constituencies — Thattanchavady and Mangalam — for a fifth term in office. The campaign of the veteran leader, who cut his teeth in the Congress party before launching his own party, the AINRC, in 2011, offers interesting spectacles.

Local people, in several places, transformed the campaign into a kind of grievances redressal meeting, as some wanted their community to be included in the most backward category, and others placed a variety of requests, including a demand for a housing patta. To all the requests, the Chief inister politely provides answers from his campaign vehicle. "Only we are going to form the next government. Do not worry. Your grievances will be addressed."

Be it in his interaction with the public, or while seeking votes or even while taking on political rivals, he is composed and talks in a soft, patronising tone.

His admirers hail him "Vaazhum Kamarajar" (Living Kamaraj, the iconic former chief minister of Tamil Nadu, a freedom fighter) and "Makkalin Muthalvar" (People's Chief Minister). They proudly say that he always responds to invitations from people, be it a domestic function or a wedding, and he does not say no to requests from the public.

A popular leader, he has been in politics for about four decades, and several people regard him as a spiritual seeker and a gentle disciplinarian. An ardent devotee of a revered saint, Appa Paithiyam Swamigal, Rangasamy always sports sacred ash on his forehead. The spiritual guru's photo adorns his campaign vehicle, as well as finds a prominent place in his campaign material.

When PTI interacted with people in the chief minister's residential locality of Thilaspet — including portions of Odai Street and Vinayagar Koil Street — it revealed surprising facts.

Several of them were aware of Rangasamy's routine, including his prayer time in the local temple, at what time he observes 'Mouna Viratam' (vow of silence) and when he provides 'Anna dhanam.' They were convinced that Rangasamy was seeking his fortune from two constituencies out of his belief in sentiments.

An elderly man even rightly said that the chief minister would be having his morning tea at a particular place at an appointed hour.

"Now it's noon; if you wish meeting CM right now, you need to go to the Nehru Street in the bazaar and he will be in his friend's place," said a young man who lives on the street where Rangasamy lives.

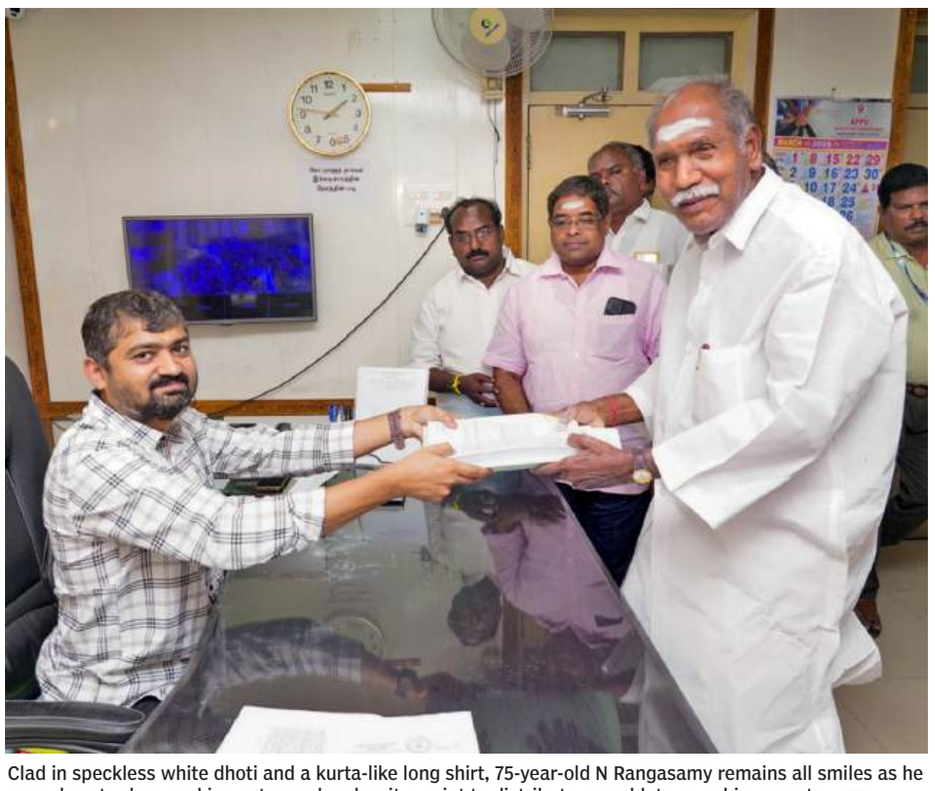
Surprisingly what he said turned out to be correct and Rangasamy spoke to PTI at that spot, at that time and listed a slew of welfare schemes for the benefit of the people.

Hailing from the influential Vanniyar community, he first became the chief minister in 2001 and was in office for a second term between 2006 and 2008. In 2011, he took over as the Chief Minister for a third term and he assumed office for the fourth time in 2021.

Puducherry is set to go to the polls on 9 April.

Out of the 30 Assembly constituencies, ruling AINRC is in the race in 16 constituencies and its ally BJP in 10, and AIADMK and LJK are in the fray in two segments each.

As regards the opposition, Congress is in the race in 16 segments, the DMK in 13 and VCK in one. Also, six unofficial Congress candidates (allotted hand symbol) are also in the fray in Mangalam, Thirubuvanai (Reserved), Kalapet, Raj Bhavan, Karaikkal-South and Uzhavarkarai. —*PTI*



Clad in speckless white dhoti and a kurta-like long shirt, 75-year-old N Rangasamy remains all smiles as he goes door-to-door seeking votes and makes it a point to distribute pamphlets on achievements —*PTI*

LETTERS

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Migration and brain drain emerge as main concerns in Kerala elections

A 40-year-old expatriate, Roy George, is eager to cast his vote in the 9 April Assembly polls after a gap of nearly 10 years, having returned to Kerala from the UK a few months ago to take care of his ailing mother.

A native of Changanassery in Kottayam district, Roy said he is unsure whether he would be able to exercise his franchise in future, like many Kerala families who have moved abroad in search of better prospects.

Migration from the state has emerged as a key issue in the election campaign, with all political fronts promising to create opportunities in Kerala so that people would not have to go abroad for studies and jobs.

"It is good that political parties are discussing migration in the election. However, a majority of people don't move out just for jobs. The salary gap between Kerala and foreign countries is huge, which attracts us to go abroad," Roy said. Roy's parents are Gulf returnees, while his siblings are also working abroad.

The family owns large tracts of rubber plantations.

"Our children are accustomed to life abroad and prefer living in the UK rather than returning to Kerala. Even though we miss our native place, we may be forced to live abroad as our children will settle there," he said.

Congress leaders, during their campaign, have highlighted that students and job seekers are leaving the state due to unfavourable education and industrial conditions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his NDA rally, also stressed that opportunities would be created in Kerala so that youth are not forced to go elsewhere in search of jobs.

The ruling LDF has promised jobs for all youngsters who complete studies in Kerala.

Congress MP Hibi Eden told PTI that the party is highlighting concerns of youngsters who prefer to stay in Kerala but are compelled to move out.

"We cannot control brain drain. But there are a large number of people who do not want to leave the state and wish to stay with their families. However, due to unfavourable conditions, they are forced to go out. For this, opportunities must be created here," Eden said.

He acknowledged that matching salaries in Europe and the US would be difficult.

"We have multinational tech companies here offering high salaries. Though lower than abroad, attractive pay packages could encourage people who want to return and settle here. More such companies and infrastructure are needed," he added.

Keralites living abroad arrive at the Kochi International Airport, ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections —*PTI*

S Irudaya Rajan, chairman of the International Institute of Migration and Development (IIMD), said that as per 2023 estimates, around 23–25 lakh people from Kerala are working abroad, while another 10–15 lakh are employed in other Indian states.

He noted that migration has been a long-standing trend and cannot be stopped.

"The brain drain cannot be stopped. Instead, authorities should focus on brain gain. There should be schemes to attract people back after their careers abroad, rather than letting them settle permanently outside," he said.

Rajan emphasised that migration is not driven by unemployment or lack of educational institutions in Kerala.

"It is estimated that over 35 lakh people from other states are working in Kerala. So, we cannot say there is a lack of opportunities. It is the salary differential that drives people abroad," he said.

He added that migration to Gulf countries is less of a concern, as many return later in life, but policies are needed to address migration to Europe, the US, and Australia, where people tend to settle permanently.

He also pointed to demographic changes, noting that many homes in central and southern Kerala remain locked, while in others only elderly parents reside.

Benoy Peter, executive director, Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development (CMID), said that creating opportunities alone may not reduce migration.

"One key issue is that youth in Kerala are reluctant to take up physically intensive jobs like construction, factory work and fishing," he said.

Highlighting wage disparities, he added, "A labourer earns over Rs 1,000 a day, around Rs 25,000 a month. In contrast, an educated worker may earn Rs 12,000-Rs 15,000 as a starting salary. This pushes many to study abroad, where they can earn better soon after completing their education."

He said that migration should not be seen as wrong, as foreign remittances are a key driver of Kerala's growth. He also pointed to social factors.

"Our society remains traditional, while youngsters are exposed to modern lifestyles globally through online platforms. They seek more freedom, and a social change is necessary," he said.

Peter said migration is a natural process and cannot be controlled. "Bringing industries alone cannot curtail migration, as labour-intensive work is already being done by migrant workers from other states. Nearly one in four workers in Kerala is from outside. For Kerala, non-polluting sectors like Information Technology and tourism are more suitable," he said. —*PTI*

26 killed in Nigeria during Easter weekend

ABUJA, APRIL

At least 26 people have been killed in three separate Easter attacks across northern Nigeria, according to military and local officials. Seventeen were killed on Saturday when armed men attacked the Mbalom community in Gwer West, Benue State. Benue State Governor Hyacinth Alia confirmed the attacks but did not specify the death toll; residents reported 17 fatalities. These violence cycles involve land disputes between Muslim Fulani herders and Christian farmers, often involving criminal gangs. Tarhana Samson, a resident, called the attacks "devastating," questioning how villagers can farm with ongoing violence. An attack on a police station in Borno State resulted in four deaths, while five were killed during an Easter service in Kaduna, where the gunmen abandoned a hostage abduction. —*PTI*

Police car chases result in 8 deaths across US

WASHINGTON, 6 APRIL

A series of police pursuits across America have caused at least eight fatalities within a week, raising safety concerns. In Texas, a man died Sunday while fleeing police. In Alabama, four died Friday when a car hit a tree during a pursuit. California saw three deaths in separate pursuit-related crashes last week. The Police Executive Research Forum's 2023 report urges law enforcement to limit pursuits to violent crimes with imminent threats. In Alabama, a driver attempting to evade police in Pike County was thrown from the vehicle along with two passengers, all pronounced dead. The incidents highlight the dangers of high-speed chases, which cause hundreds of fatalities annually, prompting calls for stricter policies. —*PTI*

SC clears way to drop charges against Bannon

WASHINGTON, 6 APRIL

Steve Bannon, an ally of US President Donald Trump, has won a Supreme Court order that is expected to lead to the dismissal of his criminal conviction for refusing to testify to Congress. The SC overturned an appellate ruling that upheld Bannon's conviction for defying a House subpoena related to the 6 January, 2021, Capitol riot. This allows a trial judge to consider dismissing Bannon's conviction "in the interests of justice." Bannon served a four-months in prison after being in contempt of Congress in 2022. The case started during former president Biden's administration but was overturned when Trump returned to office. —*PTI*

— WIKIPEDIA

Gigi Hadid denies link to 'disgusting' Jeffrey Epstein

NEW YORK, 6 APRIL

Model Gigi Hadid denied any link to that "disgusting human" after she and her sister Bella were named in US Department of Justice files on convicted sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein. In a 2015 email exchange, a redacted individual asked Epstein how Gigi and Bella became successful models. Epstein replied, "You know," prompting the individual to suggest their father had "paid the agency." Epstein denied this, saying it was "because they follow directions." Gigi acknowledged she grew up "privileged." She said it was "horrible to read someone you've never met speak about you that way." She added, "I didn't comment initially because I didn't want to take away from the stories of his real victims."—*AGENCIES*

Iran sets 10 conditions to end war with US

Demands lifting of sanctions, total control over Strait of Hormuz; UN says N-plant hit in Iran

TEHRAN, 6 APRIL

Iran has outlined a 10-clause framework to end the ongoing conflict with the US, going beyond a temporary ceasefire.

The demands include a permanent ceasefire, lifting of US sanctions, and a legal mechanism to formalise Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz, to restrict "hostile" vessels and allowing transit fees.

Other clauses cover regional conflict resolution, safe passage protocols, and provisions for reconstruction.

The war has claimed thousands of lives. More than 1,900 people have died in Iran since the conflict began, though the government has not updated the toll for days. In Lebanon, over 1,400 have been killed and more than one million displaced, including eleven Israeli soldiers.

Casualties in Gulf Arab states and the occupied West Bank exceed two dozen, while 23 deaths have been reported in Israel and 13 US service members have been killed. Pakistan has refused to comment on reports of a 45-day ceasefire proposal, but confirmed that the peace process remains ongoing

The United Nations nuclear watchdog confirmed recent strikes near Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant, with one strike just 75 metres from the facility. The International Atomic Energy Agency reported no damage, but Director General Rafael Grossi warned such attacks pose a " real danger to nuclear safety." Iran reported four strikes near Bushehr since 28 February, the latest killing a security guard and damaging a support building.

Meanwhile, South Korea's intelligence agency reported no signs of North Korea supplying Iran, while Pyongyang condemned US-Israeli attacks as illegal. South Korea plans to send ships and special envoys to Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Algeria to secure alternative oil supplies.

In domestic developments, Iran executed Ali Fahim over January protests, amid reports of torture and forced confessions.

Amnesty International criticised the trial as "grossly unfair."—*PTI*

The language which every human being uses is the manifestation of his personality and his humanity and his morality. So someone who uses rude language means that is his personality--a lot of US senators denied using that language

—Abdul Majid Hakeem Ilahi, Representative of Iran's Supreme Leader

The American President, as the highest official of his country, has publicly threatened to commit war crimes. The threat to attack power plants and bridges (civilian infrastructure) is a war crime under International Criminal Court

—Kazem Gharibabadi, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister

WEST ASIA WAR DAY-38

Smoke rises from Israeli airstrikes in Dahiyeh, a southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon on Sunday —*PTI*

25 killed as strikes across West Asia intensify

TEHRAN/ TEL AVIV, 6 APRIL

Israel and the United States launched a coordinated wave of airstrikes across Iran on Monday, killing more than 25 people and triggering retaliatory missile fire from Tehran against Israel and several Gulf states.

Explosions were reported across Tehran, where sustained aerial bombardment sent thick smoke rising near Azadi Square. Low-flying fighter jets were heard for hours as multiple sites, including residential areas and energy infrastructure, were struck.

Strikes were reported in Ahvaz, Bandar Lengeh, Karaj and Shiraz. At least six people were killed in Bandar Lengeh and nearby Kong, while a strike in Eslamshar killed at least 13.

In Qom, five people died after a residential area was hit, and three more were killed in a separate strike on a home in Tehran.

In retaliation, Iranian missiles struck the northern Israeli city of Haifa, where four people were found dead in a residential building.

Emergency services reported fires, destroyed vehicles and civilians trapped under rubble, as further missile barrages triggered repeated alerts.

An Iranian drone attack damaged a telecommunications building in Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates on Monday, the state-run WAM news agency reported.

Meanwhile, an Israeli strike in Ain Saadeh killed a Lebanese political figure and his wife, underscoring the widening regional spillover of the conflict.

Israel hits South Pars petrochemical plant

Israel attacked the South Pars petrochemical plant at Asaluyeh. Defnce Miniter Israel Katz made the announcement after Iran said the facility had been attacked.

The plant produces 50 per cent of the country's petrochemical."

An Israeli attack in March on South Pars facilities sparked major Iranian attacks targeting oil and gas infrastructure across the Gulf Arab states. —*PTI*

ISRAEL AIRSTRIKES HIT TEHRAN UNIVERSITY

Airstrikes targeted the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. Iranian media reported the strikes and damage to buildings there, as well as a natural gas distribution site next to the campus. It wasn't immediately clear what had been targeted on the grounds of the university, which is empty of students as the war has forced all schools in the country into online classes. However, multiple countries over the years have sanctioned the university for its work with the military, particularly on Iran's ballistic missile program, which is controlled by the country's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. —*PTI*

Don's abusive post makes Dems question his sanity

WASHINGTON, 6 APRIL

US President **Donald Trump** is on the receiving end of the ire of many of Democratic lawmakers over his alleged use of rude, unparliamentary words to announce the planned attack on Iran's power plants and bridges on Tuesday.

In his Sunday Easter Day post on X, ahead of his deadline to Iran to remove the chokehold over Strait of Hormuz by Tuesday, Trump wrote: "Tuesday will be Power Plant Day, and Bridge Day, all wrapped up in one, in Iran. There will be nothing like it!!! Open the F***n' Strait, you crazy b***s, or you'll be living in Hell - JUST WATCH! Praise be to Allah."

Many among the prominent Democrats including Bernie Sanders, Senator Chris Murphy, Rep. Maxine Dexter, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer have reacted sharply to Trump's post many raising questions about the state of his mental balance.

Sen Bernie Sanders wrote on X: "These are the ravings of a dangerous and mentally unbalanced individual. Congress has got to act NOW. End this war."

Senator Chris Murphy wrote, "If I were in Trump's Cabinet, I would spend Easter calling constitutional lawyers about the 25th Amendment. This is completely, utterly unhinged. He's already killed thousands. He's going to kill thousands more."

Section 4 of the 25th Amendment allows the Vice President and a majority of the Cabinet to declare the President "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." But the President can challenge this.

The Congress then needs to decide the matter with a two-thirds vote. — *AGENCIES*

UAE, Bahrain seek UNSC action on Strait of Hormuz

The UAE on Monday expressed its support to Bahrain in urging the Security Council to take action on the Strait of Hormuz.

Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs emphasized that this is no longer a regional issue--it is a direct threat to global stability.

In a post on X, the UAE Mission to the UN said, "The UAE joins Bahrain in urging Security Council action on the Strait of Hormuz. As HE Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs emphasizes, this is no longer a regional issue--it is a direct threat to global stability, food and energy security, and international law. Each day without action brings the world closer to a broader crisis…"- —*ANI*

Israel claims it killed Iran's Revolutionary Guard intel chief

JERUSALEM, 6 APRIL

Defence Minister Israel Katz on Monday announced that the Israeli Air Force had assassinated Maj. Gen **Majid Khademi**, chief of intelligence of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), as he warned that Israel would "hunt down" Iranian leaders "one by one".

Speaking after a situational assessment with Israel Defence Forces (IDF) Chief Eyal Zamir and senior officials, Katz said Iran's Revolutionary Guards were targeting civilians, adding: "We eliminate the heads of terrorists." He further warned that Iran's leadership now lives under constant threat.

Katz said Israel would intensify strikes on Iran's critical infrastructure to weaken its economy and missile production capabilities. "We struck hard at the steel infrastructure and the petrochemical industry and today and every day the continuation will come," he said.

Khademi had assumed the role of IRGC intelligence chief in June 2025 following the killing of his predecessor, Mohammad Kazemi, during the earlier phase of the conflict.

Over his career, Khademi served as head of the IRGC's Intelligence Protection Organisation from 2022 to 2025, focusing on counter-espionage and internal surveillance. Between 2018 and 2022, he led the Information Protection Organisation within Iran's Ministry of Defence.

His tenure was marked by efforts to suppress domestic dissent and counter foreign intelligence operations, often running a parallel intelligence structure alongside Iran's civilian Ministry of Intelligence. —*PTI*

Hezbollah against opening of Hormuz

Iranian-backed Iraqi group Kataib Hezbollah warned of attacks on energy facilities if attempts to forcibly reopen the Strait of Hormuz are made, Press TV reported. Abu Hussein al-Hamidawi, the Secretary-General of Kata'ib Hezbollah, said, "The enemies should be aware that any attempt to forcibly reopen the Strait of Hormuz will result in the complete destruction of every oil and gas platform or facility." The Kataib Hezbollah leader, on Sunday, said that the Strait of Hormuz would not be open to "enemies" and warned them against the use of force. —*ANI*

Declare TTP as terrorists: Pak demands

LAHORE, 6 APRIL

Pakistan put forward three core demands during a meeting with the Afghan Taliban, including that Afghanistan formally declare TTP as a terrorist organisation and dismantle its infrastructure as a precondition to end the ongoing border conflict, local media reported on Monday.

"The three demands put forward by Islamabad include Kabul formally declaring the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) a terrorist organisation, dismantling its infrastructure, and providing verifiable proof of the action," the report said, quoting sources.

The China-facilitated talks are the first major diplomatic engagement between the two neighbours since Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lil-Haq in late February to target terrorist "hideouts" in Afghanistan. The conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan intensified in recent months over Islamabad's allegations of Kabul harbouring the TTP and the Balochistan Liberation Army militants. Afghanistan consistently denied and asked Pakistan to take action, asserting that these groups are active in Pakistani provinces. According to the sources, Pakistan also made it clear that the scope of the talks will remain limited to counter-terrorism and border security, ruling out any broader engagement at this stage. —*PTI*

Russia kills 3; Ukraine targets Moscow's oil infra

KYIV, 6 APRIL

A Russian drone attack on Ukraine's southern port city of Odesa killed two women and a toddler, authorities said on Monday. Russian overnight barrages also hit energy infrastructure in the Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv and Dnipro regions, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Since invading Ukraine over four years ago, Russia has killed more than 15,000 civilians and continues to devastate infrastructure. According to President Zelenskyy, Russia launched over 2,800 drones, 1,350 glide bombs, and 40 missiles in the past week alone; these strikes recently left 300,000 households in the Chernihiv region without power after damaging distribution facilities.

Ukraine has fought back by developing its own long-range drones, which now reach targets some 1,500 kilometres inside Russia. Ukrainian long-range drones targeted Russia's key Black Sea port for oil exports. Unconfirmed media reports said the drones targeted the Sheskharis oil terminal at the Black Sea port. Russia's Defence Ministry said that air defences downed 50 Ukrainian drones overnight.

Ukraine has used them recently to hammer Russian oil facilities as Moscow looks to boost its exports after the Trump administration gave it a temporary waiver from sanctions to ease supply constraints. "Russia has no intention of stopping" its invasion, Zelensky said, —*PTI*

Rescue workers put out a fire of a residential building damaged following a Russian strike in Sumy, Ukraine —*PTI*

MANY WANT ORBAN'S DEFEAT

Hungary's high-stakes election threatens future of EU

BUDAPEST, 6 APRIL

Hungary's elections on 12 April are expected to have profound aftershocks as many in the EU hope for the defeat of Prime Minister **Viktor Orban**, widely seen as endangering the future of the 27-nation bloc.

Orban's vetoes have limited EU responses. His 16-year grip on power has tested EU governance meant to ensure peace through economic and political integration. Orban's rival Peter Magyar told reporters he would repair Hungary's relationship with the EU if elected.

Lawmakers say he uses veto power and EU funding knowledge to block decisions and extract concessions.

Hungary joined the EU in 2004, after the Cold War, in the bloc's largest expansion ever. There was widespread optimism for Hungary.

Orban came to power by promising prosperity to the rich and poor alike, said Gabor Scheiring, a former Hungarian lawmaker. He also built bonds with conservatives in the EU.

Orban began vilifying the EU, often comparing Brussels to the Soviet Union, while receiving massive amounts of EU money, and resisting to reverse democratic backsliding.

The EU faces enormous threats: rise of right-wing populism, conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia, Russian sabotage, Chinese expansion and the US upending decades of transatlantic cooperation. —*PTI*

Fair to view Kim's teen daughter as his heir, says S Korea

SEOUL, 6 APRIL

South Korea's spy agency views the teenage daughter of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un as his heir, which could extend her family's rule into a fourth generation.

The girl, dubbed by state media as Kim's "most beloved" child, has accompanied her father to numerous events since late 2022, sparking speculation that she's being groomed as the future leader.

National Intelligence Service Director Lee Jong-seok said the girl could be Kim's successor, lawmaker Lee Seong Kweun said.

The girl is reportedly named Kim Ju Ae and is about 13, but North Korea's media hasn't released many details. —*PTI*

NMDC hikes iron ore prices by up to 11.1 %

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

State-owned National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) has increased the prices of iron ore by up to 11.1 per cent. The country's largest iron ore producer has increased prices effective 5 April. NMDC has reported a record production of 53 million tonnes of ore in the 2025-26 financial year. In a BSE regulatory filing, the company has set the rate for Baila Lump (65.5 per cent, 10-40 mm) at Rs 5,300 per ton, while Baila Fines (64 per cent, -10 mm) are priced at Rs 4,500 per ton. The company's production was 21 per cent higher compared to 44.07 MT in FY25, while sales grew 13 per cent from 44.40 MT in 2024-25. *—PTI*

Nykaa projects highest growth in 12 quarters

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

FSN E-Commerce Ventures Limited, the operator of Nykaa, announced on Monday that it expects fourth-quarter consolidated net revenue growth in the "late twenties." This performance, for the period ended 31 March 2026, marks the company's highest growth in 12 quarters. According to its regulatory filing, Nykaa also anticipates consolidated gross Merchandise Value growth in the late twenties and consolidated Net Sales Value growth in the early thirties, outperforming revenue trends. Addressing the evolving geopolitical landscape in West Asia, Nykaa stated that there has been no material impact on its business during the quarter. The company noted that its Middle East exposure currently accounts for less than 1 per cent of its overall revenue. *—PTI*

magicpin launches AI assistant 'Vera' for eateries

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Food delivery and e-commerce platform magicpin announced on Monday the launch of AI Assistant 'Vera' for restaurants and retailers to gain real-time order volume insights for planning operations. During the pre-launch trial phase, over 1 lakh restaurants and retailers have already been onboarded on 'Vera'. Anshoo Sharma, CEO at magicpin, said, "Vera acts as a growth engine witht early results indicating a 1.5-2 times uplift in visibility, up to 3 times increase in customer actions and a meaningful jump in conversion to paying customers." Magicpin has committed USD 1 million to develop its AI assistant. The company fast-tracked the launch of 'Vera' to provide AI-enabled support to partner restaurants struggling with India's current LPG crisis. *—PTI*

Valura.ai makes India debut with Rs 3K cr pipeline

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Valura.ai, an AI-native global investment platform, on Monday announced the onboarding of over 1,000 wealth advisors across India ahead of its official launch, with a collective AUM pipeline exceeding Rs 3,000 crore over the next 12-18 months. The platform provides access to over one lakh global securities with client assets held in local custody within the Indian Financial Systems Code at GIFT City under, rather than being routed through offshore brokers. The pre-launch response signals strong demand for a credible global investing infrastructure when India's outbound investment surged to USD 41.6 billion in FY25, and the rupee fell over 8 per cent against the US dollar in 12 months, Valura.ai said *—PTI*

Markets bullish post rebound on softening crude prices

Sensex jumps 787 points, while Nifty nears 23K level

MUMBAI, 6 APRIL

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty staged a sharp rebound on Monday after falling in early trade following a correction in crude oil prices amid reports of ceasefire efforts in the ongoing West Asia war. Intense buying in banking and IT stocks, and a strengthening rupee, supported investor sentiment, traders said. In a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 787.30 points, or 1.07 per cent, to settle at 74,106.85. During the day, it surged 887.91 points, or 1.21 per cent, to 74,207.46. A total of 3,207 stocks advanced, while 1,147 declined and 190 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty edged higher by 255.15 points, or 1.12 per cent, to end at 22,968.25. From the 30-Sensex firms, Trent jumped the most by 7.89 per cent. Axis Bank, Titan, Larsen & Toubro, UltraTech Cement and Bajaj Finance were also among the major gainers. Reliance Industries and Sun Pharma were the laggards. Equity indices opened on a positive note, but faced profit booking, creating some intraday pressure. However, strong buying led to a sharp upside move, helping the benchmarks close at higher levels, said Hitesh Tailor, technical research analyst at Choice Equity Broking Private Limited.

BSE PSU Bank surged 2.37 per cent, Consumer Durables (2.30 per cent), Private Banks index (2.15 per cent), Financial Services (2.12 per cent), BSE Top 10 Banks (2.07 per cent), Bankex (2.03 per cent) and utilities (1.94 per cent). Energy and oil and gas were the laggards. Consumer durables emerged as the top performer, supported by a strong demand outlook and interest in consumption-led themes. IT stocks also outperformed, with the Nifty IT index gaining on the back of rupee movements and defensive buying.

Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 9,931.13 crore on 2 April. Domestic institutional investors bought stocks worth Rs 7,208.41 crore. *—PTI*

Crude oil futures rise to Rs 9,284/barrel

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Crude oil futures surged to Rs 9,284 per barrel, up Rs 91, as geopolitical tensions escalated following US President Donald Trump's warning of military action against Iran over the Hormuz Strait blockade.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, May delivery oil increased by Rs 91, or 1 per cent, approaching its record of Rs 9,407 per barrel on 23 March 2026.

The price hike came as the Strait of Hormuz remained closed for the sixth consecutive week, disrupting global energy flows, according to commodity analyst Kaveri More of Choice Broking.

She explained that this has impacted shipments of crude oil, natural gas and refined products, tightening supply conditions and supporting prices. Internationally, trends were mixed; West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures for May fell 0.48 per cent to USD 111 per barrel, while Brent oil for June rose 1.3 per cent to USD 110.43.

Although OPEC+ plans to increase output by 206,000 barrels per day in May, concerns persist over how additional supply will reach markets amid damaged infrastructure. If the West Asia situation remains same, Brent prices could reach USD 130 per barrel, driven . *—PTI*

Gold rises to Rs 1.51L/10g in futures trade

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Gold prices rose over 1 per cent to Rs 1.51 lakh per 10 grams in futures trade on Monday amid escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, the yellow metal for June delivery climbed Rs 1,621, or 1.08 per cent, to Rs 1,51,301 per 10 grams, from closing level of Rs 1,49,680 per 10 grams on 2 April.

Since the West Asia conflict, gold has lost its sheen by Rs 14,358, or nearly 9 per cent, from Rs 1,65,659 per 10 grams on 27 February.

In overseas markets, gold futures for June contract gained USD 47.55, or 1.02 per cent, to USD 4,727.25 per ounce.

According to analysts, market sentiment remained volatile after US President Donald Trump said he would bring "hell" to Iran and set a new deadline for Tuesday for the opening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Meanwhile, gold has struggled to perform its safe-haven role amid rising crude prices and expectations of tighter monetary policy by global central banks, analysts said. This has forced liquidations in precious metals to cover losses in other markets also weighed on prices.

Traders will also closely watch the US Fed Reserve's Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes for signals on the interest rate cycle. *—PTI*

Rupee rises to close at 93.04 against USD

MUMBAI, 6 APRIL

The rupee gained 14 paise to close at 93.04 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, following the Reserve Bank's initiatives designed to curb speculative fervour and dampen volatility in the rupee.

Unabated withdrawal of foreign capital, a strengthening dollar, and rising crude oil prices amid a volatile geopolitical situation continue to put pressure on the rupee.

The RBI capped banks' net open positions at USD 100 million. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 93.13 against the US dollar and gained momentum to touch a high of 92.79. *—PTI*

PMI services slip to 14-month low of 57.5%

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

India's services sector expanded at its slowest pace in 14 months in March, reflecting a decline in new business intake, a monthly survey revealed.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index dropped from 58.1 in February to 57.5 in March, marking the weakest growth since January 2025.

A PMI above 50 indicates expansion, while below 50 signals contraction.

HSBC's Chief India Economist, Pranjul Bhandari, said, "India's services sector stayed in expansion, but growth momentum eased for a second consecutive month. Demand remained resilient, led by new export orders, which rose to the greatest extent since mid-2024."

Export gains were observed across Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. Input costs rose sharply, reaching a seven-month high, driven by increased expenses on chicken, cooking oil, eggs, electricity, fish, fruits, fuel, labour, meat, and vegetables since February.

HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index declined from 58.9 in February to 57.0 in March, the slowest growth in nearly three-and-a-half years, with domestic demand slowing despite improved international order inflows.

With new orders rising at softer rates among both goods producers and service providers, sales increased at the weakest pace since November 2023. The slowdown occurred in the domestic market. *—PTI*

'Have fiscal space to support sectors affected by Iran war'

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said India has fiscal space to support sectors impacted by escalating West Asia crisis, while the Reserve Bank has room to cut interest rate to deal with global challenges.

The Monetary Policy Committee headed by Reserve Bank Governor will announce its stance on interest rate on Wednesday. There is a widespread speculation that RBI will maintain status quo. . Speaking at an event organised by the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy here, Sitharaman said that the world economy is witnessing volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, and global public debt has surged. India debt-to-GDP ratio is 81 per cent, the lowest among many economies. *—PTI*

8 CASES

CBI claims Rs 73K crore bank fraud in Ambani Group probe

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is probing bank loan frauds cumulatively worth Rs 73,000 crore in seven cases registered against the Reliance **Anil Ambani** Group, a status report filed in the Supreme Court The CBI informed the court that it is actively investigating seven cases, and is probing the roles of certain public servants as well.

After reviewing the status report filed by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the apex court issued an order on 23 March.

The ED told the court that it seized certain documents that speak about a purported "Project Help", indicating that insolvency proceedings were "deliberately" started through unrelated lenders.

The ED is currently probing eight cases related to the Reliance Anil Ambani Group (RAAG).

The Supreme Court said, "Since the preliminary facts speak for themselves, the investigating agencies must make an effort to uncover any irregularities, illegal acts, or collusion and connivance by public officials, if any, in granting undue benefits to the management of RAAG. The ED also said it has "not received" certain information sought from sister probe agencies concerning this investigation. All agencies and financial institutions were asked to cooperated with ED. *—PTI*

- After reviewing the status report filed by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate , the Supreme Court issued an order on 23 March.

REPO RATE TO STAY SAME?

RBI panel deliberates on rates amid Iran war

MUMBAI, 6 APRIL

The Reserve Bank of India's six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), led by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, commenced its three-day meeting on Monday to decide on India's bi-monthly monetary policy.

The decision, due on Wednesday, is widely expected to maintain the current benchmark rate amid concerns over inflation due to the ongoing West Asia crisis.

Since February 2025, the RBI has cut rates by 125 basis points, marking its most aggressive easing since 2019. The last rate reduction was 25 basis points in December, with the last policy status in February.

Experts believe the MPC will consider geopolitical tensions, commodity price volatility, and currency fluctuations, which have impacted inflation.

While retail inflation nears the RBI's 4 per cent target, rising global crude oil prices have raised concerns about second-round effects on domestic prices, especially fuel and transportation costs.

Every USD 10 increase in crude prices is estimated to raise inflation by up to 0.60 per cent. Crude has surged above USD 100 since late February, with the rupee depreciating over 4 per cent, pushing up import inflation.

Crude prices, which were in the USD 60 per barrel vicinity for a long time, have hardened to over USD 100 since the start of the conflict in late February.

Additionally, the rupee has depreciated by over 4 per cent since the war, which increases import inflation.

The tone of the policy is expected to remain cautious, with policymakers to highlight upside risks to inflation from volatile crude prices and geopolitical tensions. *—PTI*

Auto sales surge to all-time high of 2.96 crore units

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Retail sales of vehicles across categories in India in 2025-26 grew by 13.3 per cent at a record 2,96,71,064 units as compared to 2,61,87,255 units in the previous fiscal, with GST 2.0 helping overcome a subdued start to the year, Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said on Monday.

Passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales rose to 47,05,056 units in FY26, up 13 per cent from 41,63,927 units in FY25, the FADA said in a statement, adding that it is cautiously optimistic but watchful of the possible impact of West Asia war on vehicles demand in India going forward.

Similarly, two-wheeler (2W) sales also grew by 13.4 per cent at 2,14,20,386 in 2025-26. In FY26, three-wheeler retail sales stood at 13,63,412 units, up 11.68 per cent, according to FADA and commercial vehicles (CV) retail also witnessed a growth of 11.74 per cent at 10,60,906 units. FADA President CS Vigneshwar said this is not just a number, it represents the industry approaching the 3 crore mark. Fuel prices will also affect customer decision. *—PTI*

ACQUIRES 100% SHARES

Wipro bags USD 1B deal from Olam; to acquire Mindsprint

SINGAPORE/ NEW DELHI 6 APRIL

IT services firm Wipro has secured an eight-year transformation deal worth over USD 1 billion (about Rs 9,314 crore) with Singapore-based food and agri-business major Olam Group.

Wipro said it will acquire Olam Group's IT and digital services business, Mindsprint Pte. Ltd., for USD 375 million (about Rs 3,494 crore).

Mindsprint, founded in 2007 and headquartered in Singapore, employs over 3,200 professionals across India, Singapore, the US, the UK, and the Middle East. It reported consolidated revenues of USD 135.6 million 2025.

The proposed sale is in line with Olam Group's Updated 2025 re-organisation plan to responsibly divest and monetise the remaining Olam Group's assets and businesses over time and progressively distribute the net proceeds to its shareholders via special dividends

As part of the strategic engagement, Wipro will deliver end-to-end transformation services to Olam Group through a consulting-led and AI-powered approach.

The acquisition of Mindsprint, an all-cash deal for 100 per cent shareholding, is expected to be completed by 30 June, 2026, subject to customary closing adjustments and regulatory approvals, including anti-trust clearances in Saudi Arabia and Australia.

Under the terms of the transaction, Mindsprint will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wipro. Key management personnel, led by Mindsprint CEO Suresh Sundararajan, will continue to lead the business.

"This partnership positions us well to accelerate our transformation agenda and build a more agile, resilient and future-ready organisation," said Sunny Verghese, co-founder and CEO of Olam Group.

Olam Group is a leading food and agri-business, majorly owned by Temasek Holdings. The company supplies food, ingredients, feed, and fibre to almost 22,000 customers in 60 countries. *—PTI*

-PTI

Impact player rule takes a lot of skill out of game: Jamieson

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

Delhi Capitals pacer Kyle Jamieson on Monday joined a growing chorus of players criticising the IPL's controversial Impact Player rule, saying it "takes a lot of the skill out of the game." Several current and former cricketers have voiced concerns over the rule, which allows teams to substitute a player from a list of five at any point during a match. While some argue it hampers the development of all-rounders, others feel it has tilted the balance in favour of batters as teams can now attack throughout 20 overs with the cushion of having an extra willow wielder at number eight."Personally, I'm not a fan of it. I think it takes a lot of the skill out of the game," Jamieson said in a select media interaction ahead of the Delhi Capitals game against the Gujarat Titans.—*PTI*

Samson, Bumrah nominated for ICC player of month

DUBAI, 6 APRIL

India opener Sanju Samson and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah were on Monday named among the nominees for the ICC Player of the Month award for March following their success at the T20 World Cup. South Africa batter Connor Esterhuizen completes the shortlist following an outstanding debut T20I series in New Zealand that saw one of the best statistics after five games by anyone from his country. Samson's sizzling form towards the end of the T20 World Cup, which earned him the player of the Tournament award, puts him in the fray alongside Bumrah, who was adjudged the player of the match in the final.—*PTI*

India chase Billie Jean King Cup play-offs spot

NEW DELHI, 6 APRIL

India will look to make the most of familiar conditions and home support when the Asia-Oceania Group I ties of the Billie Jean King Cup begin at the DLTA Complex on Tuesday, with promotion to the 2026 play-offs firmly on their radar. However, the home challenge has suffered a dent with the withdrawal of talented Shrivalli Bhamidipati. Placed alongside Indonesia, Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand and Thailand, the hosts face a stiff challenge in a tightly-contested field where only the top two teams will progress, while the bottom two sides will be relegated to Group II for 2027.—*PTI*

-PTI

Spaun rallies to win Texas Open for first title since US Open

SAN ANTONIO, 6 APRIL

J.J. Spaun came up with two big shots at the end of a long, wet Sunday, one leading to a birdie and the other to an eagle that carried him to a 5-under 67 and a one-shot victory in the Valero Texas Open for his first title since the U.S. Open last summer. Spaun won for the second time at the TPC San Antonio, with one big difference. His victory four years ago got him into the Masters. Now he is the U.S. Open champion who already had his spot at Augusta National secured. But this was an important win. He had yet to finish in the top 20 in seven starts this year his best was a tie for 24th in The Players Championship and now the 35-year-old Californian has a validating win in tough conditions as he heads into the first major of the year.—*PTI*

Mumbai seeks a reset against rampaging RR

Bowlers will need to raise their game against Rajasthan

GUWAHATI, 6 APRIL

Mumbai Indians will hope that skipper Hardik Pandya regains full fitness when they square off against a confident Rajasthan Royals unit, which will be keen to extend its early-season momentum in their IPL clash here on Tuesday.

Pandya, a key figure in the side, missed MI's previous outing due to illness, and his absence proved crucial in their six-wicket defeat to Delhi Capitals on Saturday.

While India T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav stepped in to lead and ensured continuity, MI missed Pandya's all-round abilities on a tacky surface. His absence also forced a rejig in the combination. Deepak Chahar, drafted in for the game, delivered a tidy spell, but the decision to bring in pace all-rounder Corbin Bosch in place of seasoned left-arm pacer Trent Boult backfired, with the South African leaking runs.

Pandya has since travelled with the squad and returned to the nets, offering hope of a comeback as MI look to recalibrate their approach after the loss.

Shardul Thakur, who starred with the ball in their opening game, was expensive in the last outing. At the same time, the ever-reliable Jasprit Bumrah has been economical but has yet to open his account this season.

In the spin department, Mitchell Santner justified his selection ahead of Afghan mystery spinner Allah Ghazanfar and is likely to retain his place.

The MI bowlers, however, will need to raise their game against a Rajasthan top order that has been in excellent form so far.

Openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi have provided explosive starts, with Dhruv Jurel then building on the momentum. —*PTI*

It wasn't easy to change my batting foundation: Padikkal

Royal Challengers Bengaluru batter Devdutt Padikkal attributed his growing confidence in white-ball formats to the willingness to move out of his comfort zone and "change the foundation" of his batting.

Devdutt followed his 61 against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the opening game with a 50 against Chennai Super Kings here on Sunday to fuel RCB's batting charge, which culminated in a 43-run win. "It's just a lot of hard work and a lot of self-belief that's helped me get there. It wasn't easy to make that change because it was something that I had to change from the foundation that I had in terms of the type of cricket I wanted to play growing up," Devdutt said in the post-match press conference on Sunday night. "The change is something that I had to make consciously, and RCB and the whole support staff have been really great in guiding me in the right way," he added. But is there a danger of T20s becoming unidimensional because all the batters are looking to improve their range-hitting skills?

BADMINTON ASIA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Satwik-Chirag pull out; Lakshya, Sindhu lead India's charge

NINGBO, 6 APRIL

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have withdrawn from the Badminton Asia Championships due to the former's shoulder injury, even as in-form Lakshya Sen and seasoned PV Sindhu gear up to spearhead India's challenge to end a long wait for a singles title in the continental showpiece. Satwik and Chirag, who had won the title in 2023, opted out as the former continues to recover. "Satwik still has some pain, so they won't be playing this week," coach Tan Kim Her told PTI. The duo had earlier pulled out of the Swiss Open ahead of their quarterfinal match due to a recurring right shoulder injury to Satwik. India will now rely on Lakshya and Sindhu in singles, with both looking to end the country's 61-year wait for a title in the discipline.

Former national champion Dinesh Khanna remains the only Indian to win the men's singles gold at the continental meet in 1965, and Lakshya will be keen to follow in his footsteps after a runner-up finish at the All England Championships.

The 24-year-old from Almora will open his campaign against Hong Kong's Lee Cheuk-yan.

Sindhu, meanwhile, returns after a disrupted European leg. The two-time Olympic medallist was stranded in Dubai en route to the All England Championships due to the conflict in West Asia, forcing her withdrawal. She subsequently skipped the Swiss Open to recover and will begin her campaign against Malaysia's Wong Ling Ching.

India will also have a busy men's singles slate, with HS Prannoy, returning after recovering from a shoulder injury, set to face a qualifier, while Kidambi Srikanth takes on Singapore's eighth seed Loh Kean Yew. US Open champion Ayush Shetty faces China's fifth seed Li Shi Feng.

In women's singles, apart from Sindhu, Unnati Hooda meets Thailand's Supanida Katethong, Tanvi Sharma takes on Malaysia's K. Letshanaa, and Malvika Bansod faces Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan. —*PTI*

Second season of Rugby to be played in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, 6 APRIL

GMR Sports, in partnership with Rugby India, the national governing body for the sport, announced that the second edition of the Rugby Premier League (RPL) will be held at the Gachibowli Stadium, Hyderabad, from June 16 to 28, 2026.

"We will always strive to deliver a better product for our fans, do better by our sponsors, and last but not least, be better partners for our franchises, their owners and their support staff," Rahul Bose, President of Rugby India, said.

"RPL 2026 at the Gachibowli Stadium in Hyderabad sets out to achieve all this and more." —*PTI*

K'taka win Sub Junior Women's Nat'l Hockey

RANCHI, 6 APRIL

Chandigarh and Karnataka won their respective Division B matches, while Mizoram, Haryana, Odisha, and Jharkhand triumphed in Division A games of the Hockey India Sub Junior Women National Championship here on Monday.

Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu defeated Hockey Unit of Tamil Nadu 1-0 in their Division B, Pool A fixture, with Anushka Gupta (41') scoring the winning goal.

Chandigarh beat Hockey Himachal 4-1 in their Pool B Division B clash with Annu (7',14',52'), registering another hat-trick, while Rani Radha (42') also contributed in the win.

Karnataka scored a commanding 6-1 win over Gujarat in a Pool B, Division B match. K P Sinchana (20',52'), M M Thaniya (2'), S M Kusumanjali (19'), Pretti Neelaraddi (22'), and Huggennavar Basamma Shivappa (26') were the goal scorers for Karnataka, while Parvatiben Gamar (31') scored a goal for Gujarat.

In Pool D, Division A, Mizoram secured a 2-1 victory over Chhattisgarh. K Vanlalpeki (14', 41') scored a brace, while Manpreet Kaur (27') scored for Chhattisgarh.

Hockey Haryana defeated Manipur Hockey 4-2 in their Pool C, Division A encounter. Radhika (12'), Diya (18'), Vishakha (42'), and Antika (44') scored goals for Hockey Haryana, while Tongbram Reenu Devi (5') and captain Devi Moirangthem Prinja (6') were the goalscorers for Manipur Hockey. —*PTI*

ASIAN BOXING C'SHIPS

Preeti Pawar stuns Aeji Im to enter final

ULAANBAATAR, 6 APRIL

Rising Indian boxer Preeti Pawar downed Paris Olympics bronze medallist Aeji Im of Korea to storm into the final, while the seasoned Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain bowed out of the Asian Boxing Championships here on Monday.

Priya and Arundhati Choudhary also notched wins in their respective semifinals, while world championship medallist Pooja Rani and Ankushita Boro signed off with bronze medals after losing their semifinals.

The star of the day was Asian Games bronze medallist Preeti, who delivered a composed and clinical performance, dominating all three rounds against Im to secure a 5-0 win.

She will now face Chinese Taipei's Huang Hsiao-wen, a three-time World Champion (2019, 2023, 2025) and Tokyo 2020 Olympic bronze medallist, in a marquee gold medal clash.

Preeti Pawar -*PTI*

In the women's 60kg category, Priya produced a commanding display to defeat local favourite Namuun Monkhor 5-0, sealing her spot in the final. She will now take on North Korea's Un Gyong Won in the title bout. Arundhati impressed with a 4-1 victory over Uzbek Oysha Toirova in the 70kg semifinal. —*PTI*

AIFF CONDOLES DEATH OF 'ASSAM'S PELE' GILBERTSON SANGMA

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Monday condoled the death of former India forward Gilbertson Sangma, often referred to as "Assam's Pele".

Sangma, who died in Guwahati on April 3, was 70.

A forward of repute from Assam, Sangma represented India at the international level in 1975. He made his senior national team debut against Indonesia on April 17, 1975, in the Marah Halim Cup in Jakarta. Sangma, who had been unwell for the last couple of years due to age-related ailments, went on to earn three caps for India, all of which came during the same tournament. At the domestic level, Sangma was a consistent performer for Assam in the Santosh Trophy from 1972 to 1980, scoring four goals in the competition during his appearances for the state side.

At the club level, he represented Assam Police from 1972 to 1982 and was part of the team that won the Bordoloi Trophy in 1981. Sangma scored the decisive goal in the final against Dempo, sealing the title for his side.

The AIFF joins the Indian football fraternity in mourning the loss of Gilbertson Sangma and honours his contributions to the sport. —*PTI*

Candidates Chess: Pragg under pressure at halfway stage

PAPHOS, 6 APRIL

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa will be desperate for an elusive win in his bid to stay afloat in the Candidates Tournament when he takes on Dutchman Anish Giri in the eighth round here on Tuesday.

The 20-year-old from Chennai, who currently occupies the third spot with Giri after logging 3.5 points in seven rounds, just has another seven rounds to turn the tide at the halfway stage.

Starting off with a victory over Giri in the opener, Praggnanandhaa has been looking for a second win that is just not forthcoming.

It has been a tough ride in which he has drawn five games and lost one against tournament leader Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan, who has enjoyed a fairytale journey since last October when he won the World Cup against a highly competitive field.

At the start of the tournament, he was, at best, a dark horse according to pundits, but he has proved himself way stronger than the rest.

He has, so far, clocked the most impressive performance in the history of the tournament by winning five and drawing the remaining two games. —*PTI*

-PTI

STAWELL GIFT

Sha'Carri Richardson storms from scratch to win

STAWELL, 6 APRIL

American sprint star Sha'Carri Richardson surged through the field Monday to win the Stawell Gift, an annual race contested on handicap over 120 meters on grass in a small Australian town near Melbourne.

In the 144th edition of the event, Richardson provided one of its most breathtaking finales as she started at scratch and caught the field at the 90-meter mark before pulling away for an astonishing win in 13.15 seconds.

"Just make sure I'm patient that first 10 meters as my coach told me today, and just executing the rest," Richardson told Seven Network television post race. "I think I realized I was gonna win right past 90."

The 26-year-old American, one of the fastest women of all time, is just the third woman to win the race from scratch and claimed a prize of 40,000 Australian dollars ($27,500).

Richardson won a silver medal in the 100 meters in the 2024 Paris Olympics and a gold in the 4x100 relay that same year.

She also claimed the 100-meter title at the 2023 World Championships.

After a near calamity in the semifinals earlier Monday, where Richardson rose too soon and was almost pipped on the line, the American made no errors in the final, chasing down the field early and running through the line powerfully.

She celebrated with fans before embracing boyfriend and former world champion Christian Coleman, who was the marquee name of the men's draw.

She and Coleman remain in a relationship despite a domestic violence charge against Richardson last July.

"This is one of the most exciting, fun, and entertaining track meets I've ever run in, not just that, but the love, the true love and support for track and field, unbeatable," she said. —*PTI*

Leeds beats West Ham in penalty shootout

LONDON, 6 APRIL

Leeds threw away a two-goal lead in second-half injury time and had a double scare in extra time before going on to beat West Ham in a penalty shootout on Sunday and reach the FA Cup semifinals for the first time since 1987.

Mateus Fernandes and Axel Disasi struck in the 93rd and 96th minutes as West Ham leveled the score at 2-2 at London Stadium and forced extra time — where two goals for West Ham were chalked off for offside — before Leeds won the quarterfinal shootout 4-2.

West Ham debutant Finlay Herrick saved a penalty from Joel Piroe, but Leeds eventually prevailed with Pascal Struijk scoring the winning penalty.

The thousands of West Ham fans who had left early were trying, and failing, to get back in when Taty Castellanos thought he had put the Hammers ahead in the opening seconds of extra time after a bad error from Leeds goalkeeper Lucas Perri, only for VAR to rule Castellanos offside. —*PTI*